ALBERT T. MOLLEGEN, D.D., S.T.M., B.D.

CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN MAN

THE CRISIS OF SECULARISM

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BY

ALBERT T. MOLLEGEN, D.D., S.T.M., B.D.

AFTER MANY YEARS of inspired teaching, the Reverend Albert T. Mollegen, one of America's foremost theologians, who has been called "the American Tillich," has at last begun to put into simple prose for the layman the principles of his profound religious thought. In this, the first of several brief volumes in which his teaching will be abstracted, he deals with the spiritual dilemma of modern man in the present critical period of Western civilization.

The chief obstacle to man's spiritual comfort Dr. Mollegen finds to be Secularism, a materialistic attitude toward God and the world that has increasingly laid hold of men's minds from its beginnings in the seventeenth century. Not an unadulterated evil in itself, Secularism has nevertheless not proved sound enough in its understanding of man, society, human history and the universe to survive in the complicated world of today. The result is that man tends to live a life without meaning, and hence is in despair.

One of the causes of this despair is the present impossibility of an intelligent man any longer to believe in the doctrine of progress current in the recent past. For progress cannot exist unless sustained by a truly Christian culture. This Christian culture has been so undermined that man no longer expects religious experience, but trusts only his own reason and his own common sense. The inadequacy of this trust sends him to such non-Christian and idolatrous "refuges" as the psychiatrist or the Nazi and Communist movements. These so-called asylums fail him, for despair and meaninglessness overtake and destroy them as they do all Western Secularism. It does not have enough religious power to over-

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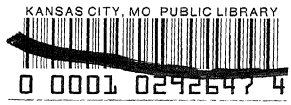
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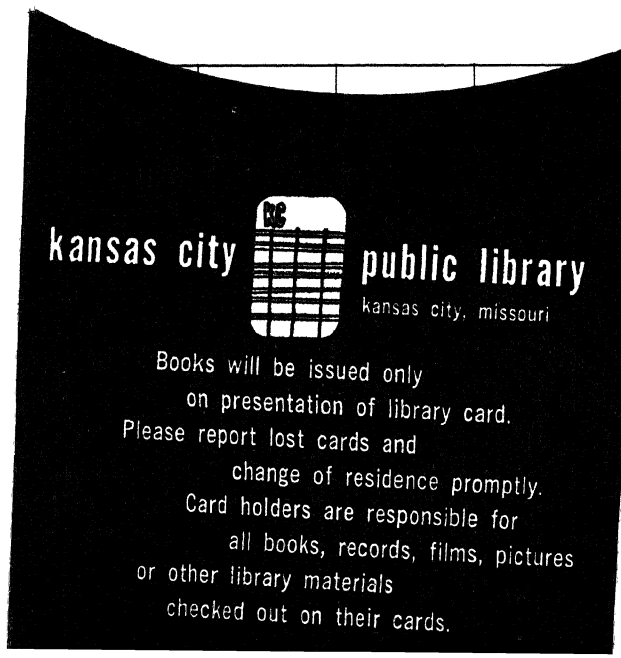
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Albert T. Mollegen, S.T.M., D.D.

PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE
VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY, INC.
A SUBSIDIARY OF HOWARD W. SAMS & CO., INC.
Publishers • INDIANAPOLIS • NEW YORK

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Printed in the United States of America

First Edition

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 61-7895

To Ione

who has sat through many lectures

better and worse than these

Preface

The content of this book is an encounter between the critical and scientific mind of modern man and the classical doctrines of Christianity. This encounter first occurred in the living rooms of various Washington homes.

It started in 1944, after two members of my congregation at St. Paul's Church, Alexandria, Virginia, where I was part-time acting rector, had called on me and suggested a series of sustained conversations with eight or ten couples about the Christian religion. We met for a full evening every two weeks. News of our group spread, and shortly there were four such groups, three of which continued for over two years. Mostly they were composed of individuals who had been educated out of Christianity or who were uncertainly related to it. A few were devout Anglicans. Many of them finally became active Christians and leaders in the churches. Some of them founded *Christianity and Modern Man*, a school on the post-graduate level with no credits or diplomas, which tries to present classical Christianity and relate it to the expression and problems of modern existence. The school still continues and has been the occasion for many to find, recover or clarify their Christian faith.

The school was planned and is administered by an Organizing Committee. I never really understood St. Paul's "diversity of gifts" but "one Spirit" until I began to work with and love this group. They have always wanted a book. And now they have it in a way that is characteristic of our history.

This book is based on our first course of fifteen lectures, delivered in the Washington Cathedral Library. They were given without notes, but were recorded, transcribed and mimeographed. The course was designed to deepen our understanding of our times. It had three main sections: first, following the pattern of Henry Adams, a foundation point for contrast with

modernity, namely, the world view of Medieval Christendom and the Reformers—classical Christianity; second, the rise of the modern world, traced from the Franciscan movement and the secularization of the late Renaissance and Enlightenment, on past Hegel, Darwin, Marx, Comte and Freud to the present situation; finally, a restatement of classical Christian doctrines as they have survived the scientific, industrial, and political revolutions, with some obscurantisms deleted and insights added by critical interaction with the modern spirit.

William Archer Speers has ordered and rewritten much of the original lecture material, and Monroe Stearns has believed the result worth publishing. To these persons and to the members of the Committee I am grateful for their patience, perseverance and generosity. I hope charitable readers will find something of what the Organizing Committee and the others found to justify their labors.

A. T. Mollegen

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CHRISTIANITY
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CHAPTER I

Life Without Meaning— the Predicament of Secularism

If Christianity is right, secularism is undergoing a crisis which can result only in its own death. "The secular" means simply belonging to "the age" or "the world." But secularism is non-religious, even anti-religious. Bishop Block once defined it as "the practice of the absence of God," and Bishop Pike has said it is "this-world-is-all-there-is-ism." The latter was not contrasting "this worldliness" with "life after death," but with the whole dimension of the divine which the New Testament calls the Kingdom of God.

Secularism has been by no means an unmitigated evil. In the West it has appeared as a child of Christianity, pitting itself against the corruptions of institutional Christianity and bringing many human and material benefits. Nevertheless, it is not profound enough in its understanding of man, society, human history and the universe to survive. It will break down into demonic expressions, or re-enter the Christian sphere of redemption from which it springs. This is the issue which underlies and is within all the issues of the twentieth-century world.

Secularism in its modern Western form began about the seventeenth century. Its twentieth-century development has revealed its ultimate emptiness, its essential impotence and its tragic disintegration. Current literature abounds with analyses of the "predicament of modern man." This predicament is the end product of secularism, which Arnold Toynbee has called

"the vain repetition of the Gentiles," by which he means the attempt to live only by human reason and resources, an attempt which destroyed Greco-Roman civilization.

Christopher Dawson, the English historian, has put the problem quite concisely in his essay "Christianity and the New Age":

"The Western mind has turned away from the contemplation of the absolute and eternal to the knowledge of the particular and the contingent. It has made man the measure of all things and has sought to emancipate human life from its dependence on the supernatural. Instead of the whole intellectual and social order being subordinated to spiritual principles, every activity has declared its independence, and we see politics, economics, science, and art organizing themselves as autonomous kingdoms which owe no allegiance to any higher power . . . [and] have no faint understanding of their relationships to each other."

The predicament is total, cutting deep into every branch of human life. It is not only the concern of the theologian and the evangelist, but of the scientist, the philosopher, and of the artist as well. In fact, it is often these men who have spoken most urgently and well about the helplessness and horror of our times.

"Modern man [wrote the psychoanalyst C. G. Jung in 1935] has lost all the metaphysical certainties of his medieval brother, and set up in their place the ideals of material security, general welfare, and humaneness. But it takes more than an ordinary dose of optimism to make it appear that these ideals are still unshaken. Material security, even, has gone by the board, for the modern man begins to see that every step in material 'progress' adds just so much force to the threat of a more stupendous catastrophe . . . Let man but accumulate his materials of destruction and the devil within him will soon be unable to resist putting them to their fated use. It is well known that firearms go off by themselves if only enough of them are together."

Bertrand Russell, the philosopher and mathematician, has described the predicament in "Free Man's Worship," one of the most beautifully written essays in the English language:

"Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way. For man, condemned today to lose his dearest, tomorrow himself to pass through the gates of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day; disdaining the coward terrors of the slave of fate, to worship at the shrine that his own hands have built; undismayed by the empire of chance, to preserve a mind free from the wanton tyranny that rules his outward life; proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate for a moment his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned, despite the trampling march of unconscious power."

In *For the Time Being* W. H. Auden describes the state of affairs. If, says he, there is a good deal of death and destruction lying about in the world, if there is still much waste and pain and grief, these after all are perfectly familiar troubles and part of a permanent, circular pattern of bad with good, "from sword to ploughshare, coffin to cradle, war to work." Till lately, he continues, we knew of no other troubles.

But then we were children: That was a moment ago,
Before an outrageous novelty had been introduced
Into our lives. Why were we never warned? Perhaps we were.
Perhaps that mysterious noise at the back of the brain
We noticed on certain occasions—sitting alone
In the waiting room of the country junction, looking
Up at the toilet window—was not indigestion
But this Horror starting already to scratch Its way in?
Just how, just when It succeeded we shall never know:
We can only say that now It is there and that nothing
We learnt before It was there is now of the slightest use,
For nothing like It has happened before. It's as if

We had left our house for five minutes to mail a letter,
And during that time the living room had changed places
With the room behind the mirror over the fireplace;
It's as if, waking up with a start, we discovered
Ourselves stretched out flat on the floor, watching our shadow
Sleepily stretching itself at the window. I mean
That the world of space where events reoccur is still there,
Only now it's no longer real; the real one is nowhere
Where time never moves and nothing can ever happen:
I mean that although there's a person we all know about
Still bearing our name and loving himself as before,
That person has become a fiction; our true existence
Is decided by no one and has no importance to love.
That is why we despair; that is why we would welcome
The nursery bogey or the winecellar ghost, why even
The violent howling of winter and war has become
Like a juke-box tune that we dare not stop. We are afraid
Of pain but more afraid of silence; for no nightmare
Of hostile objects could be as terrible as this Void.
This is the Abomination. This is the wrath of God.[1]

Now, here is St. Paul (Romans 1:18-25) speaking of an analogous situation in the disintegration of Greco-Roman culture.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds, or animals, or reptiles.

"Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to

[1] Copyright 1944 by W. H. Auden. Reprinted from *The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden* by permission of Random House, Inc.

impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen."

St. Paul is saying that the loneliness, the isolation, the meaninglessness of life, the void into which man is plunged by his deliberate act of alienation from God, is indeed the judgment of God. Whether or not Auden was influenced by the passages in Paul is unimportant; the point is that both men know that God removes himself from those who remove themselves from him.

While this modern act of man has roots that go back more than three hundred years, the revolt did not become manifest until the seventeenth century. This is generally called the age of the "second fall" of Western man, when the new Adam, created by over fifteen hundred years of Christianization, begins to pretend that he is not Christian man, but merely natural man. It seems to me that every Christian who has any comprehension of what has been going on for the last three or four hundred years can agree. Since the seventeenth century we have been on a steady decline in the whole realm of the spirit. We have been led into a kind of individualistic isolation and loneliness, into an anarchy of the departments of life, into neuroses and psychoses on a massive social scale (in Nazism, for instance) and on an individual scale, so that the psychoanalyst is the high priest of our secular culture, and rightly so. (When T. S. Eliot, in his play *The Cocktail Party*, wants to reaffirm Christianity, he chooses this secular priest to represent the hidden workings of God in the world.)

As an Anglican, I must add a second important element to the understanding of our secular age. While some Roman Catholic theologians tend to feel that everything that has happened since the Renaissance is a result of and a part of the fall, the Protestant takes some comfort in recalling that he stands within the great prophetic tradition of the Bible. In this spirit he can

always see the hidden hand of God in the enemy of the church and believe that this is God's way of chastising the church for its sins of pride, arrogance, and obscurantism.

But what hope is there for the man who stands outside the Christian foundations, non-religious, secular man who seems committed to a kind of perpetual, if brilliant, disintegration? Can he hope to re-establish a relationship with God? Is there any point in his doing it? Is it too late for God and Christianity—is religion a primitive waste of time? If there is some hope, some point in it, then what can Christianity suggest, and how can such a discredited old idea presume to impress this man's bright, bedeviled mind?

In the following pages I shall try to answer these questions in a very hopeful way. I am going to take a historical approach to show why it is that secular man thinks the way he does, and how it was that secularism grew—in a sense, joyfully encouraged by Christian culture—how it waxed strong and optimistic in that great movement of the Western spirit, the Renaissance, and how it later led to disillusion and despair. Finally, I want to show that classical Christianity is none the worse for centuries of misunderstanding and neglect, and that a great segment of it has profited from the encounter with modern science and philosophy. It is well able to confound bedevilment and speak eloquently to men and women who have had a modern education and are steeped in the presuppositions of secularism.

CHAPTER II

The Christian Mainstream

A. The Augustinian Structure

People today have very different ideas about what Christianity is. Some think it is primarily an ethic; others think of it as the spirit of a man named Jesus and an allegiance to him and his ideals; and a few of our most sophisticated thinkers are sure it is merely a neurotic illusion. Most modern views—even those held by some professed Christians—are wrong or superficial. At best they are attenuated and ghostly representatives of the classical Christian tradition.

Until about four hundred years ago, you could assume that everybody understood just what Christianity was. This understanding was based on the structure which St. Augustine presented to the world in the fourth century. And for nearly eight hundred years, until the appearance of St. Thomas Aquinas, Augustinian theology was the classical theology of the Western Church. All Western theology derives from and depends upon Augustine's work—both Protestant and Catholic theologies. Luther was an Augustinian monk, and depends upon Augustine almost as much as does St. Thomas.

This great Christian figure, who lived to see and agonize over the disintegration of the Roman Empire, is not to be regarded simply as an individual. He is the Christian Church making itself articulate through a brilliant mind. In his *History of Philosophy*, the German historian Windelband introduces the section on the philosophy of the Middle Ages as follows:

"When the migration of the peoples broke in devastation over the Roman Empire, and the latter lacked the political strength to defend itself against the northern barbarians, scientific civilization, also, was in danger of being completely crushed out; for the tribes to whom the scepter now passed brought still less mind and understanding for the finely elaborated structures of philosophy than for the light forms of Grecian art. And, withal, ancient civilization was in itself so disintegrated, its vital force so broken, that it seemed incapable of taking the rude victors into its school.

"Thus the conquests of the Greek spirit would have been given over to destruction beyond hope of rescue, if in the midst of the breaking down of the old world, a new spiritual power had not grown strong, to which the sons of the North bowed, and which, with firm hand, knew how to rescue for the future the goods of civilization and preserve them during the centuries of subversion. This power was the Christian Church. What the State could not do, what art and science could not achieve, religion accomplished. Inaccessible still for the fine workings of aesthetic imagination and abstract thought, the Germans were laid hold of in their deepest feelings by the preaching of the Gospel, which worked upon them with all the power of its grand simplicity . . ."

The Church was the Ark, if you will, which survived the flood and stored within itself the works of Plato and Aristotle and the conceptions of art which were later loosed in the Renaissance—not unmutilated, to be sure, but nevertheless saved.

Augustine was part of this ancient, dying world. He was born in 354 in Numidia, a province roughly congruent with modern Algeria. He went to the University of Carthage, where he rejected his Christian upbringing, took a mistress, and studied mightily to find himself a point of view, an attitude that would give life meaning. He was first deeply attracted by Manicheism, a religious philosophy imported from the Orient, which exaggerated the dualism of Greek philosophy, maintaining that all evil stems from materiality and that all good comes from the spiritual. Its ultimate implication was that one should have nothing to do with the continuation of this world. It was an

asceticism whose logical end was the prohibition of marriage and procreation. (A rather watered-down version of this world-view is current in Christian Science, which makes no ecclesiastical provision for marriage.)

Augustine did not rest long in Manicheism. His mind was too subtle and fine for the crudities of its myths and the grotesqueness of its solution to human problems. He moved on to Neoplatonism but dropped that too, as we shall see later on. He still had his mistress, by whom he had had a son, but no world-view.

At this point he went to Milan, and, under the influence of his Christian mother, began to listen to the preaching of Bishop Ambrose, one of the most brilliant and devout leaders of the Church. Finally Augustine decided to be baptized. He withdrew from society, gave up his mistress, and plunged deep into the study of Christianity. Then, in rapid succession, his mother died, his son died, and he himself returned to his native Numidia.

Christianity he found to be obviously the world-view he needed. So effective was his explication of it that he was forced into the priesthood by popular demand. He tried in vain to lead a contemplative life, but in a matter of four years he was made bishop coadjutor and finally became Bishop of Hippo, a town near his home, about 140 miles west of Carthage. His province was a stormy one. There were schisms in the Church brought on by long historical controversies. Then in 410 the Huns sacked Rome.

The pagans charged that Rome had died because it had become Christian, that because of its apostasy the pagan gods had abandoned it. To answer this attack, St. Augustine wrote his famous *De Civitate Dei (The City of God)*, declaring that Rome perished as a judgment of God for its lack of justice. The work is the first great Western philosophy of history; Augustine's discussion of Church and State and their relationship set the pattern for the Christian Middle Ages.

What is the picture of Christianity we get from the *City*? What is the classical Christianity which St. Augustine tells us about in this and his other writings?

He was fond of beginning a discussion with his contemporaries by saying: "Look, everybody wants to be happy. That's what you want; that's what I want; Cicero says in *Hortensius* that every man wants to be happy; and that's a good place to begin. We seek happiness by our interaction with our environment, by the satisfaction of our desires.

"Every man *loves* something. He may love drink, or sexual gratification, or philosophy, or he may love to create form and color as an artist; but every man loves. And each man *is* the thing he loves. Our desires so knit us to their object that we begin to take on the quality and the powers of the thing we love. But man is restless, and no earthly love seems to satisfy him; every fulfillment of his desires leaves him frustrated, so that he moves restlessly in search of self-fulfillment."

This is true, said St. Augustine, because man is seeking the fulfillment of himself in the wrong objects. Man is violating his own true nature when he seeks happiness in anything less than fellowship with the one, true, almighty God who created man in order that man might have fellowship with him. And man violates not only the order of his own nature but the order of all Nature as well. For he was made to love above himself—to love God. If he love himself first, or some other human being, or if he love beneath himself, things such as food or gold, then he is taking God's good order and bending it. And of course he plunges himself and his society into misery.

Why does he do it? Because he is a sinner, said St. Augustine. God made man in his own image for fellowship with himself. God did not make puppets unable to rebel against him; he made free, rational creatures. Man by his freedom has loved the other-than-God as though it were God.

In one of his great sermons (No. 96) St. Augustine wrote what is probably the profoundest analysis of human sin:

"The first destruction of man was the love of himself. For if he had not loved himself, if he had preferred God to himself, he would have been willing to be ever subject unto God; and would not have been turned to the neglect of his will and the

doing of his own will. For this is to love oneself, to wish to do one's own will. Prefer to this God's will; learn to love thyself by not loving thyself. For that ye may know that it is a vice to love one's self, the Apostle speaks thus: 'For men shall be lovers of their own selves.' And can he who loves himself have any sure trust in himself? No; for he begins to love himself by forsaking God, and is driven away from himself to love those things which are beyond himself; to such a degree that when the aforesaid Apostle had said 'Men shall be lovers of their own selves,' he subjoined immediately, 'and lovers of money.' "

St. Augustine's point—and it was the same one made by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans—is that as soon as the human consciousness turns away from God to love of self, then one can no longer love oneself truly. One does not even understand oneself. There is a steady disintegration of the human personality when it has forsaken God, said Augustine. "Thou hast begun to love thyself: stay in thyself if thou canst." Why do you go outside of yourself? "Hast thou, as being rich in money, become a lover of money? Thou hast begun to love that which is outside of thee—thou hast lost thyself."

In becoming estranged from God, man becomes estranged from himself. Then comes disorder. The mind loses control over the passions and the body. In the language of modern psychiatry one becomes neurotic, perhaps even psychotic.

This loving oneself as against loving God is called by St. Augustine "pride." It is the essence of all sin; indeed it is sin itself. And sin is not primarily the commission of specific wrong acts; sin is the malady of man which lies *behind* the commission of wrong acts, and which permeates and corrupts the doing of all good acts, too. Pride is man's malady, and because it is man's malady, man cannot save himself. Every effort he makes to do it proceeds from self-love and only drives him deeper into his love of self. For if through the doing of good works he becomes an exemplary citizen, a friendly man, a public-spirited man, he only feeds his self-righteousness and further alienates himself

from God. Man cannot save himself; and each center of pride—whether it be individual, racial, cultural, class, or national—becomes a source of conflict. Man deifies himself, exalts himself and turns God's good creation from order to chaos and war, which sets individual against individual, family against family, class against class, race against race, culture against culture, and nation against nation.

"Whence doth iniquity abound?" asks St. Augustine. "From pride. Cure pride and there will be no more iniquity." If you translate "pride" into the language of modern psychology, you would say self-centeredness—the self-centeredness of classes and nations as well as of individuals. If you listen to many public speeches today about our confrontation with Communism, for instance, you would think that the United States is eternal. You would never gather that we are perishable like all other great nations, or that our economic order may not be the best possible, the economic order for eternity. This is idolatry, this is pride, this is the surest way to perish. Any human system of justice will perish without self-criticism. For the harder one's foes press, the stronger becomes the tendency to deify oneself. The result is a crystallization which is not able to undergo the changes necessary for survival. This is a sure way to death. Self-deification is sin; and the wages of sin is death.

St. Augustine found, out of his penetration of history as well as out of his own personal experience, that there was no possible hope for man without God, that there was no way for man to save himself. He was ready for Christianity, he was ripe for the good news that God had done something to save man. He took the great Christian tradition which he received and described it in the following terms.

When man sinned, said Augustine (and he uses the myth of the fall of the angels and of the fall of Adam), when man rebelled against God, then God began anew. God chose unto himself a people; with the coming of the Jewish law he sharpened and clarified man's sense of his predicament, his sense of sin. God did all this in preparation for his final great action in which he became man, in which he engaged man's life with his

own, precipitating the final struggle of man against God. For if it is the second nature of sinful man to make himself God in *pride*, it is also the nature of the Christian God to make himself man in *love*. There had to be a head-on collision between self-elevating man and descending God. And that head-on collision was the Cross outside Jerusalem, in the first century.

Why did God do this? He did it in order to lift man out of his self-love into man's own true and proper end: the love of God. God came and shattered our self-love by his invasion, and by loving us to the bitter end of the Cross, God won from us a love which we could not give him by our own will power. By his suffering and love God literally won from man a love which man could not give to God except in this atoning action. Christ is the center of this action. As the mid-section of an hour glass is the center of its function, the point at which the sand moves from the top chamber to the bottom, so all of God's great action toward mankind comes to a "bottleneck focus" in Jesus Christ. There God works by his impact upon mankind, in Christ and through Christ's Cross. He wins man back to fellowship with himself.

The true end of man can therefore be known, experienced, and participated in only by those who respond to Christ. "We love, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19) was a favorite text of Augustine. This does not mean that God loved us generally and abstractly, but that he loved us concretely in Christ and in his Cross. So, said Augustine, prideful man is won back to faithfulness and obedience to God. By Christ man becomes a lover of God, and he is bound with an indissoluble bond to all other lovers of God. And this is the Holy Catholic Church. It is the community—the communion, the fellowship—of the faithful, of those who love God and love one another in God. They do not love the world as though it were God, nor do they love themselves as though they were God; they love God.

This, of course, is the true Church, and this true Church has external signs. It has a polity: an organization, a political framework. It has a message: a Word, the Biblical Gospel which is proclaimed by the preacher and the teacher. It is

entered by baptism, and its most characteristic act is the fellowship of its common meal, in which it reconsecrates itself, sacrifices itself, to God.

If one stands outside this great Church, one can look at it as a social institution, said Augustine. That is the empirically discernible Church—the Church visible to the eye of the sociologist or the historian. Not everybody in that Church belongs to the true Church—not by any means. The true Church is the community of the faithful whose lives are ordered by the true order of God. On the other hand, you cannot be a member of the true Church without being a member of the visible church. Outside it you are not under the constant claim of the living Word of God; you are not in the fellowship of the lovers of God. You cannot possibly be a Christian outside of the Church, although not everybody who is inside the visible Church is necessarily a true Christian.

This Church, said Augustine, this Holy Catholic Church, is the actualization, the realization, of the true purpose of all human existence. It is the fulfillment of the end for which man was created. The fulfillment—that is, participation in God's life—lies beyond the possibilities of ordinary nature and history. But here in the church you have in a broken and partial way eternal life itself, both as something that is actualized and as the certain promise that its perfection shall come.

Here, then, in capsule form, is the classical Christianity of St. Augustine: God made everything and it is good; God made man in his own image, so that he might have fellowship with God (the Christian doctrine of creation). Man, by his rebellion, his pride, has spoiled the good order of God's creation and set its parts at war with one another: because man has so estranged himself from God he can no longer save himself (the doctrine of sin). But God had, by preparatory action—whose history is the Old Testament—and at last by final action in Christ and especially in Christ crucified, so moved toward man as to redeem him (the incarnation and the atonement). These mighty acts of God created the Holy Catholic Church, the fellowship of the lovers of God who love one another, which is the true

inward soul of the great visible external Church, and is the first installment of eternal life.

B. Its Hellenistic Bias

Augustine's Biblical Christianity, which even today forms the Christian core, was strongly influenced by both Greece and Rome. Both influences had important effects on history. The Greek asceticism which attracted Augustine before his conversion left traces in his view of the world which helped make the Renaissance and the Reformation inevitable. The Roman ideas of order and justice which Augustine accepted—and thereby helped preserve—opened the way not only for the Western democratic state but, ironically, for Marxism as well.

Mystical asceticism

First let us look at Augustine's Greek heritage. Before he became a Christian, he had for a time been a Manichean. By a rigorous asceticism Manicheism sought to free the immaterial aspect of man from his body and from the materiality of the universe. After testing this approach, Augustine moved on to Neoplatonism, a much more subtle and austere Greek mysticism. It was Platonism stretched out into a religion, and it became an alternative to, and even a foe of, Christianity from the third to the fifth century A.D. Gilbert Murray in *The Five Stages of Greek Religion* describes the mood behind Neoplatonism in this way:

"It is the rise of asceticism, of mysticism in the sense of pessimism; a loss of self-confidence, of hope in this life and of faith in normal human effort; a despair of patient inquiry; a cry for infallible revelation; an indifference to the welfare of the State; a conversion of the soul to God. It is an atmosphere in which the aim of the good man is not so much to live justly, to help the society to which he belongs and to enjoy the esteem of his fellow creatures; but rather, by means of a burning faith, by contempt of the world and its standards, by ecstasy, suffering,

and martyrdom, to be granted pardon for his unspeakable unworthiness, his immeasurable sins. There is an intensifying of certain spiritual emotions, an increase of sensitiveness, a failure of nerve."

Neoplatonism sees the whole of existence not in terms of a basic matter-spirit dualism, but in terms of a kind of hierarchial ladder with an infinite series of rungs, each one merging imperceptibly with the next. At the top is the One, the Absolute, God, so ineffable that one can predicate of him only negatives. It cannot be said that the One has feeling or emotion, or that he (or it) thinks, for the One is beyond all feeling and emotion and thinking. It cannot be said that he knows anything other than himself, because in him there is a unity of subject and object.

The purpose of life is that by an austere philosophical contemplation one mounts up the ladder, passing from level to level until one reaches the goal of life, which is to plunge oneself into the ineffable One. There is no ecstatic emotionalism here, and we must not confuse it with medieval mysticism; it is very sane, calm, serene, rational. But when this union with the One has been achieved, one passes beyond all dichotomies, all brokenness in life; one is at one with God. One is no longer self-conscious; therefore one knows absolute bliss. One is above the multiplicity of this human experience.

It is obvious that the whole project abstracts the individual from social responsibility, from all sensuous experience, from all human loving and human relationships, and moves toward a rigorous, cold, intellectual asceticism. This is the flight of the alone to the alone; this is metaphysical mysticism, which is pagan and not Christian; this is the attempt to wrest oneself from all contacts with materiality—which is the denial of Christian sacramentalism.

Augustine came out of that environment into Christianity, and it is a miracle that he understood Biblical Christianity as well as he did. He understood it increasingly as he studied the Bible and matured in the Christian experience. Nevertheless,

he was never able to overcome the basic Neoplatonist experience and presuppositions.

Nowhere is this clearer than in Augustine's fundamental mystical asceticism; and nowhere is his belief in the monastic, celibate life more obvious than in his monographs "On the Good of Marriage," "On the Good of Celibacy," and "On the Good of Widowhood." In the last analysis the contemplative life, and the withdrawal from all the involvements of society, is the ideal. This ideal informed to one degree or another the whole of Catholic Christianity from Augustine to the Reformation.

Remember that he was fundamentally Christian, fundamentally rooted in the Biblical tradition. He would never say, for instance, that the evil in life arises out of materiality. Sin is always the sin of the rational soul of men. When man has sinned, when pride has set in, the punishment is that one no longer has rational control over one's passional and fleshly nature. Concupiscence, lust, carnality, is the punishment for the primal sin; but it is the affliction of every man.

Marriage is a good; celibacy is a higher good, said Augustine. But he went further than that. While marriage is a good in itself, it can never be free from the sin of lust. Therefore, he concluded, every Christian ought to be celibate if he is able. Although marriage in itself is not evil, it is so inseparably connected with concupiscence that it is a concession to the inability to govern oneself rationally. So it is a remedy for fornication.

Therefore Augustine could say to those widows who had become nuns that they are perfectly justified in urging upon everyone their state in life: "Let there not bend you from this earnest purpose, whereby ye excite so many to follow, the complaint of vain persons who say 'How shall the human race subsist, if all shall have been continent?' As though it were for any other reason that this world is delayed, save that the predestined number of the saints be fulfilled; and were this the sooner fulfilled, assuredly the end of the world would not be put off."

Augustine is saying, "Don't let them dissuade you from converting all to the celibate life by their vain, prideful question. If everybody becomes celibate, then this is God's good time to

end the world, so don't let it worry you that you might shut off the creation!" In another passage, earlier in the same epistle, he points out that it is primarily the Christian's business to convert and regenerate—that is, to baptize. Therefore the Christian can leave natural generation to the pagans. You might say: "Let the pagans beget and the Christians baptize."

The static Christian republic

Neoplatonic asceticism and another Greek concept, that perfection is static and transcendent reality, combined to produce Augustine's view of history and his theory of the Christian's social responsibility. In the early days the church was a small group which regarded the world as something passing away. It therefore took no social responsibility whatever; in fact, it was not permitted to, for it was then an illegal religion. But as times changed, the new religion became quite acceptable, and Christians found themselves in positions of responsibility in society. It is Augustine who gives the first theological justification of this predicament.

To put it briefly, here is what Augustine said about the difficulties of his own position, that of judge: "Look how terrible it is to be a judge; how fallible all human judges are! And yet the life of the prisoner may depend upon the judge's decision." In those days there was trial by torture, and Augustine said: "Who can tell? A man might confess to a crime which he had not committed because the torture was unbearable. On the other hand, a man with great stamina and courage might survive the torture and not confess when he really was guilty. What a terrible thing it is to be a judge!"

No Christian wants to take this terrible responsibility. Augustine quotes the Psalm: "O Lord, take me out of my troubles." And yet the Christian must sit as judge; he must take his responsibility as a statesman—and as an emperor, if that be his lot. For if the Christian does not rule and wield power and make judgments, the non-Christian will. That is Augustine's imperative to take power.

Society, as Augustine saw it, fell into great basic formations.

Here is the family, here is the little city, and there is the larger city—the Roman Empire. One is a part of all these basic institutions of life. If one is unable to become the monastic celibate contemplative, one takes up one's responsibility in them reluctantly, groaningly, in travail. And one does what? One tries to quiet the turbulence of life and to bring society under the control of the static forms, the heavenly order. One tries to produce a Christian Platonic Republic.

The best that one hopes for in this world is, therefore, the Christianization of the culture of the day. God is not a revolutionary, he is not the God of whom the Magnificat declares: "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away." God is really the God of Arnold Toynbee's philosophy of history. He is the conservative who baptizes and purifies the status quo and makes it as good as possible and uses Satan as the revolutionary.

The static character of Greek rationality also affects Augustine's interpretation of the Millennium, and colors his whole view of history. As you will recall, the Book of Revelation describes three ages. There is the terrible Now, when the Roman Empire is persecuting the Christian Church, and the Church is feeding martyrs into the beyond day by day. Then there is to be a Millennium, a thousand-year period in which Christ shall reign upon earth under more or less natural and historical conditions. After this will come the final end of the world and the heavenly order.

Augustine took the Millennium and said: "This is it, here and now. The reign of Christ began with his life, death, and resurrection. The sphere in which his reign is acknowledged is the Church. About five hundred years of the thousand have elapsed; therefore we face about five hundred years in the future—and, after all, a day with the Lord may be a thousand years with man. The Church, therefore, faces an indefinite future span of time. And the Church is the Millennium, the place where Christ reigns."

Under the Augustinian interpretation, therefore, Christians could not look forward to a better age ahead, other than the final end, the consummation of everything. It is an interpretation which stops, or attempts to stop, history and one which holds sway well into the Middle Ages. It seems to abolish the category of time. The significant thing about history is that a shaft of eternity pours into this order on earth, baptizing and purifying it, lifting people above it, sending them into the beyond. The dynamics of history have stopped; there is no thrust toward the future.

Augustine's philosophy of history comes to us most fully and eloquently in *The City of God,* and in it you will recognize the elements of his Classical Christianity (and St. Paul) playing their part. Here is Augustine speaking in Book XIV of *The City of God:*

"Accordingly, two cities have been formed, by two loves: the earthly, by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly, by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The former, in a word, glories in itself, the latter glories in the Lord. For the one seeks glory from men; but the greatest glory of the other is God, the witness of conscience. The one lifts up its head in its own glory; the other says to its God, 'Thou art my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.' In the one, the princes and the nations it subdues are ruled by the love of ruling; in the other, the princes and the subjects serve one another in love, the latter obeying, while the former take thought for all. The one delights in its own strength, represented in the person of its rulers; the other says to its God, 'I will love thee, O my Lord, my strength.' And therefore the wise men of the one city, living according to man, have sought for profit to their own bodies or souls, or both, and those who have known God 'glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise'—that is, glorying in their own wisdom and being possessed by pride—'they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made

like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.' For they were either leaders or followers of the people in adoring images, 'and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever.' But in the other city there is no human wisdom, but only godliness, which offers due worship to the true God, and looks for its reward in the society of the saints, of holy angels as well as holy men, 'that God may be all in all.' " [Romans 1:21-25 and I Cor. 15:28]

All of history, said St. Augustine, may be interpreted as the progress, the conflict, and the interweaving of these two cities—the city of God and the city of earth. It is important to remember that in Augustine the city of God may not be identified with the empirical Church, and that the city of earth may not be identified with the State. Rather, the Church is the best, although inexact and mixed, representation of the heavenly city of God; and the pagan State is the nearest outward and visible expression—historical formulation—of the city of earth. Augustine therefore hoped and labored to purify the existing Church to make it conform to the image of the heavenly church; to have all baptized members profoundly Christian. And he sought also to bring the State, with its prince and its hierarchy of classes, into the Church in such a way that there would be a Christian State where the princes served the interests of all the people, and where the love of God, not love of self, predominated.

Augustine never said that the hierarchy of the Church should stand in a political way above, or in any governing relationship to, the hierarchy of the State. He did not even discuss this problem. His great vision was simply one of bringing the whole of human culture, the whole of politics, the whole struggle for justice in this world into the sphere of the Church's life, to baptize a great people, a great structure of society. He did not even think of changing the structures. The only possibility for him was to purify society.

Stoic justice

St. Augustine's Roman heritage stems from the Stoic idea of justice, which is based on the concept of equality. Augustine accepted the law of equality as the law of nature, meaning the law of human nature, the law of society and the whole world. The law of nature, moreover, was the order of divine creation, the law of the Christian God. This law, says Augustine, was in perfect sway before the fall of mankind. It meant that there was no private property; all things were owned and held in common, though individually used. There was no slavery. But more than that, there was no coercive rule of man over man, no use of power to coerce men into obedience to a social will. There was no State. The only authority was the authority of the mature over the immature, the father over the children.

With the fall, however, the institution of the coercive State was made necessary. It is because men sin that the State is made necessary—so, also, for private property. As Augustine did not mean that there could ever be a time in human history when men could do without the State, so he did not mean that men could abolish private property. The radical natural law of equality was no longer directly applicable to the sinful world. But as these institutions were still to be judged by this law, they were never regarded simply as "good"; they were the lesser of evils, they were the best you could make of a sinful situation.

The implications of this line of thought for the history of Western civilization are clear enough. When secularism discards the Christian encounter with God, it loses the dimension of original sin because it has lost divine redemption. The problem of man then becomes one simply to be solved by morality and education. Moral effort and education working through political means can produce a return to the Garden of Eden. The natural law of equality can be realized, the state will, then, "wither away," as Marxism teaches. So also can private property disappear. Since it is an institution for sinful existence only, it becomes superfluous when sin is eliminated. Drop out

God and sin, dynamize Augustine's "nature" with a secularized version of Providence, and you get Karl Marx's outlook.

For Augustine, at any rate, the State, the economic order, and the family itself as now found in the fallen and sinful condition, are relative goods. One belongs to them and supports them, but one always sees them as so deeply involved in evil that one pulls out of them as much as possible and seeks the contemplative monastic, ascetic life, the life of the supernatural order—the life of the angels which rises high and clear above this world.

Two levels of Christian ethics

In St. Augustine we first encounter in a clear and profound way the dual ethic of medieval Christianity. By the Middle Ages it was given a very elaborate description as the ethic of "the counsels of perfection" and the ethic of the precepts or commands. The counsels are the teachings of Christ, which are not commanded of everybody as necessary for salvation; they are counseled, if you are able to accept them, as the way to live the life of Christian perfection. They are poverty, chastity, and obedience—the essence of the monastic life. The precepts, on the other hand, govern the life of those who marry and give in marriage, who are responsible for the order and justice of society, and who are involved in all the tortuous and complex evils of human society.

At no time did Augustine say that this life is purely evil. It is always good—the bonds of community are good and God-given. Yet this life is bent and distorted, and rendered tragic and evil by human sin. So the Christian is always a pilgrim here, and the true Christian life is under the supernatural norms. The monastic is the saint, the ideal.

C. The Thomist Synthesis

The theology of St. Augustine, which was the intellectual articulation of a living relationship with God and with men and with history, progressively permeated the West. The bar-

barians were converted, baptized, and civilized. After a long period of chaos, the Holy Roman Empire replaced the Roman Empire, and the institutions of society were slowly conditioned with Christian charity and justice. As this process matured—in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries—medieval man felt more at home in the world, less a pilgrim than he had in the days of the breakup of the Roman Empire.

The theologian of the new Christian man was St. Thomas Aquinas, who did his great thinking and writing in the years 1240-1274, during the height of success of the Holy Roman Empire. And herein lies the fundamental distinction between him and Augustine: Aquinas wrote in a period when there was, relatively speaking, a Christian culture. Nevertheless the framework of thought and the basic conceptions of St. Thomas are still Augustinian. They still stem from the Biblical tradition; they still accept the ascetical and supernaturalistic life as the highest form of Christianity, and the dual ethic of life above this world and life in this world. St. Thomas still accepts the static pattern of Greek rationalism, which seems to quiet all dynamism in history, to hold in check all forces which are likely to become tempestuous and disorderly. For order, in the Greek conception, is a static thing.

And yet, in Aquinas, the Augustinian world-view has been softened. Medieval man is much less an enemy of nature, because nature is not so distorted and disrupted by sin. Man is not so great an enemy of God as he is in St. Augustine's thought; the fall did not plunge him so low. He can do much more to co-operate with God in working out his salvation.

Moreover, Aquinas is not so critical of the Church. He is not so concerned to warn bishops and other churchmen that they wield power and can be corrupted by power like any earthly prince; that bishops can belong to the city of this earth and not to the city of God. Aquinas writes at the end of the development of the Holy Roman Empire, and the end of the development of the church under the Papacy, and he simply sanctifies all this. He gives the rational justification for it without ever turning his great powers of mind on it in criticism. The

prophetic judgment upon the misuses of ecclesiastical hierarchical power is muted.

While Aquinas did not change the fundamental structure of Augustine's thought, he modified it in many ways. Most important was his substitution of Aristotle for Plato as the philosophical foundation of his theology. While Aristotle, like his teacher, Plato, still does not take this world as a good thing that has been created by God, he is willing to put his feet more firmly on the ground. Plato believed that the realm of ideas had an independent existence and that one knows such qualities as man-ness or tree-ness through recollection of the realm of eternal forms before the "fall" into this carnal existence. For Aristotle this quality, or universal, is but the essence of a group of particulars. By an intellectual intuition you grasp the element of tree in all trees, the element of man in all men; but you do this because you *see* trees and men. Sensuous experience for Aristotle is not merely the occasion for the recollection of your former rapport with the heavenly world, it is the actual communication by which you perceive and grasp the essence of things.

It is this aspect of Aristotelianism more than any other which made possible the new theology of St. Thomas, usually referred to as the "medieval synthesis." Here, briefly, is the way it goes.

Man can know nature (all objective reality) by natural reason, by the intellectual intuition, and in principle he may know it perfectly. But there is also another realm of being, the supernatural, which cannot be known by reason at all. Natural reason can know by argument from the universe that God is, but it cannot know *what* God is. (I don't believe that; St. Augustine didn't believe it either.) Nature is the textbook for natural knowledge; for the supernatural realm there is another textbook, the Bible. And this realm is knowable not by natural reason, but by faith.

Faith is a quality of the reason that is produced by an act of the will—the will to believe. When the will turns the intellect's attention to the truths of the supernatural order, the truths of the Bible proclaimed by the Church, then the human

reason is irradiated with the influence of the supernatural world —grace. Only when this divine influence penetrates the human reason can one have supernatural knowledge. Then one may know what God is and what the Christian life is, and how to participate in it. One can begin to live in the supernatural order. One then begins to understand the doctrine of the Trinity; one understands the incarnation, the atonement, the Church, the sacraments, the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of Creation, the end of the world, the Last Judgment, and the heavenly consummation.

Faith gives one access to this realm of knowledge, the textbook of which is the Bible. But the Bible has to be interpreted, and the Bible has been interpreted by the great councils of the Church which have decided dogma. The pope is the final voice of interpretation of the Scriptures, the final authority for the supernatural truths in matters of faith and morals. He calls the councils to give assent to his authoritative intepretations.

These two realms, the supernatural and the natural, meet at the point where natural reason can know that God is but not *what* he is. Indeed, the supernatural overlaps into the natural order, revealing things you can know by natural reason, because so many men can never achieve the power of intellect and sustained attention that great philosophers like Aristotle achieved. So, something is revealed which is also knowable by natural reason, namely, the existence of God.

Here are two levels of knowledge, one above the other. Here is the synthesis of all human knowledge with all theological knowledge, with all Christian knowledge. It moves by gradations upward from physics to theology. At the center it makes a transition from reason to faith; grace completes nature.

This is the medieval synthesis.

D. The Protestant Reinterpretation

This noble medieval view of God, man, and the universe was broken in the sixteenth century by a German Augustinian monk, Martin Luther.

One of the most shattering parts of Luther's achievement was the fact that he questioned the authority of the Church, a matter which had been accepted for nearly a thousand years. It had been accepted implicitly, for it had not been consciously questioned since the early days of Christianity.

You and I live in a world where this problem of authority has been raised, and where all solutions to it are unsatisfactory to some of us. I am sure you will understand me when I say that when Luther challenged the infallibility of the pope and his councils, the modern restlessness was loosed in principle. I think we shall not be done with it until the end of history. Luther could not solve this question of authority; Protestantism has not been able to solve it; and Roman Catholicism has been unable to get universal acquiescence to its solution—a dogma of Papal Infallibility made binding on Roman Christians in 1870.

By faith alone—Luther

The one who sprang this revolution on the world was a devout and conservative man, stubborn, to be sure, but as far from a revolutionary as one could imagine. He had no conception whatever of Christianity as something every man could interpret for himself. He was no individualist. One searches him in vain for the seeds of modern humanism, subjectivism, and rationalism. As a layman, Luther had taken seriously the medieval ideal. He was confronted by a Christ who was his judge and who would be content with nothing less than the imitation of Christ. But, as a layman, Luther discovered that he could not meet this ideal. So he became a monk.

He entered the Augustinian Order to begin his pilgrimage toward perfection. He became a good theologian in the monastery and was chosen to teach in the University of Wittenberg. His lectures on the Bible show that long before he was aware of what had taken place, and long before he nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the church door, Luther had grasped in principle all that unfolded later as the great Lutheran understanding of Christianity.

The beginning of the break with the old order came wholly within the medieval sacrament of Penance. Let us see how this sacrament was practiced and understood theologically. In the early Church confession was made "publicly" before the congregation (although we must remember that early congregational life was secret and private), and the congregation required of the penitent what was called "the satisfaction," or penance. The discipline assigned and undertaken was regarded by the early Church as well pleasing to God and a demonstration to the congregation of the sincerity of repentance. Once the discipline was fulfilled, the penitent was forgiven and readmitted into the congregation.

By the thirteenth century this aspect of the church's life had been transformed into a sacrament. In the Sacrament of Penance, the "satisfaction" came after absolution. This meant that repentance removed the barrier between the sinner and the merciful God. By confession and by the act of divine forgiveness through the priest's absolution, guilt is taken away. Thus forgiveness is not delayed until after the "satisfaction."

Now that satisfaction was no longer a prerequisite for forgiveness, it became relegated to a somewhat lesser function. While confession and absolution removed the eternal consequences of sin, and cleared the way again for a man's salvation, satisfaction, or penance, had to do with paying off the punishments accruing from the temporal aspects of one's sin. Penance, then, came to deal with the punishments of God in this life and in the intermediate life, purgatory.

Whatever may have been the depth of any individual's faith, medieval man was hardly ever afraid of Hell. But it was almost as bad to spend thousands of years in Purgatory as it was to go to Hell forever, and medieval man's great fear was of a long term in Purgatory. To help solve this religious anxiety, the Church developed the practice of indulgences. This was a system which paralleled the old German custom of hiring someone to do your military service. Now, if you had been assigned a pilgrimage, for instance, you might hire someone to make the

trip for you. That seemed to satisfy part of medieval man's anxiety.

But there was another worrisome anxiety: the priest may have unknowingly assigned too little penance. In that case, you would still have an unknown amount of penance to do in purgatory. So medieval man was uncertain about the whole business. He never knew, in this system of divine bookkeeping, just what his bill was. Not even the pope knew.

To meet this need the Church brought forward what in the thirteenth century was a recent Christian doctrine: the fact that the infinite merits of Christ formed a treasury which could be drawn upon to satisfy a debt of penance. At first, the "chancellors of the exchequer" were the priests, but the treasury of merit was a very valuable monopoly, and the priests misused it. So the bishops took over the dispensation of merits. But they, too, were not incorruptible, and finally the dispensation of indulgences in this form became solely a papal prerogative.

If indulgences shortened one's term in purgatory, then it was an easy matter to get ahead of the bookkeeping by having great indulgences stored up in case one did sin and fall in debt for satisfaction. So, in storing up great reservoirs of merit, transferred by the pope from the inexhaustible treasury to the credit of the individual, medieval man got some peace. And, as popular purveyors of indulgences for the pope were not always careful to define the efficacy of an indulgence, masses of medieval Christians thought they were procuring helps toward eternal salvation itself.

Looked at from the standpoint of bookkeeping this system makes no sense at all. For one pays on an unknown debt, indefinitely, out of an inexhaustible treasury. No banker could possibly understand this. Still, one must try to understand it religiously, in terms of medieval man's insecurity and uncertainty about just what his score with God was, and also in terms of his fear of Purgatory being far more concrete than his fear of Hell.

Martin Luther himself at first had no idea of doing anything

other than speaking against the corruption of this system of indulgences. When he posted his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg, it was in no way like the publication of the *Communist Manifesto*. It was simply an academic, formal, conventional invitation to his colleagues (and anybody else) to debate the theological issue.

Here is the essence of the Theses, which were long, repetitive, and very wordy:

1) An indulgence is and can only be the remission of a merely ecclesiastical penalty; the Church can remit what the Church has imposed; it cannot remit what God has imposed.

2) An indulgence can never remove guilt. The pope himself cannot do such a thing; God has kept that in his own hand.

3) It cannot remit the divine punishment for sin, eternal or temporal. That also is in the hands of God alone.

4) It can have no efficacy for souls in purgatory; penalties imposed by the Church can only refer to the living; death dissolves them; what the pope can do for souls in purgatory is by prayer, not by jurisdiction or the power of the keys [papal authority].

5) The Christian who has true repentance has already received pardon from God altogether apart from an indulgence, and does not need one; Christ demands this true repentance from everyone.

6) The Treasury of Merit has never been properly defined; it is hard to say what it is, and it is not properly understood by the people; it cannot be the merits of Christ and of his saints, because these act of themselves and quite apart from the intervention of the pope; it can mean nothing more than that the pope, having the power of the keys, can remit ecclesiastical penalties imposed by the Church; the true treasury of merit is the Holy Gospel of the grace and glory of God.

There was dynamite in the Theses, but nobody saw it at first. It was a theological argument that was proposed, and while Luther's colleagues thought him rash they did not understand the gravity of what he had said. In fact, nothing really drastic

happened until the sale of indulgences began to fall off. Then Luther began to get attention in Rome.

To make a long story short, he was forced to defend his position before Johann Eck, a papal representative, and a skilled theologian and debater. At the trial Luther's conduct was exemplary. He stood humbly, he spoke clearly but with great humility, and he maintained good humor. He stayed completely within the principles of his Theses, until Eck, whose strategy was to get Luther to identify himself with heresy, forced Luther in all honesty to say that the papacy was not infallible in matters of faith and morals. This, after all, was implicit in the Theses. The accuser asked, "How about a Council of the Church?" And Luther had to say that he didn't believe even a Council of the Church was infallible; it might well be wrong. So they had him.

The experience which drove Luther to his world-shaking action stemmed from his own failure to achieve the life of perfection in imitation of Christ in the monastery. According to the testimony of his fellows, he was a good monk—humble, hard-working, self-effacing, full of penitence. Yet, he never felt satisfied. He understood sin, and he never felt he had a release from it. In confession and absolution and performing satisfaction there was no solution to the problem of being good enough to be saved. It was here that he rediscovered, as a result of re-reading the Pauline Epistles, the great Pauline doctrine of justification by faith and not by works.

The full slogan of the Lutheran Reformation is "Justification by the grace of God received by faith alone." To put it perhaps too simply, this doctrine recognizes that all Christian goodness flows from a relationship to God. Good works, good acts and goodness of the human heart, are not the precondition for right relationship to God. They are the result of right relationship to God.

Faith, for Luther, was the total response of the total man in gratitude, love, trust and obedience to the goodness and the graciousness of God, hidden everywhere else, but revealed clearly in one place: the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ and the

love revealed in the passion and death of Christ, who now reigns as Lord. One is given one's right relationship with God out of pure, spontaneous, uncaused love on God's part. This love is objectively set before one's eyes in Jesus Christ and him crucified. For Luther faith ceases to be merely intellectual assent; it ceases to be something different from our love toward God. It therefore includes radical obedience to God, the straining of every effort to do good works; but it stresses the motivation of response to God as the peculiarly and uniquely Christian motivation, and it points to the fact that goodness, as Christianity understands goodness, always stems out of the relationship to God and depends on His influence. It is not something we can achieve for ourselves.

Luther had entered into this experience as a result of his own wrestlings with God and his own studies of the Scriptures. He therefore realized that it did not come out of the Sacrament of Penance. Hence, the Christian man in the Church was not dependent upon the priestly absolution or the hierarchy of the Church for his reception of the forgiveness of God. It came in a person-to-person encounter—in the Church, of course. Herein lies Luther's "priesthood of all believers." He meant that the ministry did not stand as the barrier between the individual Christian and his God, in the great fellowship of the Church. He went back to the New Testament, which says that as we are all living, organic members of the one body of the high priest, Christ, so we are a royal priesthood ourselves, offering ourselves to God in priestly action. So we must add the concept of the priesthood of all believers to the great Lutheran Reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone.

One Biblical ethic for all

Another important principle developed by Luther in his reinterpretation of Christianity concerns the Church's dual ethic. Following the patterns of St. Augustine, medieval Catholicism understood that Christian life could be lived on two levels. For those who were able, the higher level was the ascetic, monastic, contemplative way, rising above the natural life of man and

living the supernatural life. By the thirteenth century, and especially with Aristotelianism instead of Platonism as the undergirding natural theology of the church, the radical nature of Augustine's demand had been modified. But the framework of the double standard for Christian living was still present in Roman Catholicism (and it still is).

What Luther discovered in the radical nature of his new encounter with God on the basis of the New Testament, and particularly in the Pauline Epistles, was that every man is called to live by the counsels of perfection, but that the counsels of perfection in the Bible are quite different from what they were conceived to be by the medieval Church. At one and the same time Luther destroyed the distinction between a higher and lower level of the Christian life. He visits the absolute demand for perfection on every human conscience, and recovers the true meaning of this law. He discards his Platonic interpretation, recovers the original Biblical interpretation, abandons the medieval ideal of saintliness, and restores the New Testament idea of the collective body of the saints—the *communio sanctorum.*

What is the New Testament understanding of the law? Luther found in the Sermon on the Mount the command to love one another as a result of loving God. One loves one's neighbor because one loves God and because God loves one's neighbor; therefore one cannot love God without loving one's neighbor. That is the Law and the Prophets. That is the whole summary of the divine demand upon man. There is no two-level character about it. It does not demand that some love more than others; it is a demand that falls equally on all human consciences. Every man is called to the perfection of the Sermon on the Mount. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," said Jesus. Not "this commandment is for those who are able, and other precepts are for those who are not able."

But even more important, said Luther, the law is a commandment to love one's neighbor, and love does not mean withdrawing from one's neighbor and from the human context. Love

plunges one into responsibility for all the natural relationships of life. Love calls one also into the support of civil society and its functions. Love calls one back into life. Luther's criticism of monasticism and of the medieval ideal of the saint was that it was *un*natural, not *super*natural. The saint does not love his neighbor or serve his neighbor by withdrawing from life. The Christian is obligated by the Biblical ethic to take up total responsibility for the total human existence with all of its many facets and expressions: the family, the economic order, the community of culture, and the State.

The Lutheran tension

This single standard creates a tremendous tension in the heart of Protestant man. For, in responsibility to the commandment to love, he enters the natural human orders of existence; yet, immediately he finds that he must, in all responsibility, contradict the commandment to love.

If one is to understand modern culture, one must understand this tension. As one reads Luther himself and as one reads about him, one wonders why Luther does not break in two. On the one hand, in his deep inner life there is this relationship with God in which he is called to the perfection of absolute humility and nothing but acts of love; and on the other hand, he is called to responsibility for all human existence and is involved in all of the evil one cannot escape if one becomes responsible for the institutions of life.

It didn't take an atomic bomb to make Luther understand this terrible tension. I don't think he would have felt it any more intensely in our age than he did in his own.

Add to this the fact that by reason of Luther's recovery of the New Testament Pauline experience, Protestant man now stands before God's absolute demand, with the white heat of the divine righteousness upon him, unprotected by a hierarchy and a sacramental system. Man stands naked before the awful and terrible God, who says, "Be ye perfect," when one can't be perfect; who also says, "Love," and by that draws one into responsibility for society. One cannot understand Protestant

culture without knowing that it is born with this great tension in its heart.

Now, Luther was able to bear this tension and make it articulate because he had found a way to face it. One can never admit that a reality which one faces is as bad as it is until one has a way to overcome it or be safe from it. Luther could admit that the dilemma of Christian man is the real dilemma that it is because he had found a way out. That way was justification by faith.

Luther explained it this way: The commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all of thy being, and thy neighbor as thyself," speaks to the law of nature in man—to his basic created likeness to God, his conscience, if you will. Man accepts the law, but he also knows he cannot comply with it. Man cannot comply, says Luther, because of his fallen nature, because of original sin. Man therefore cannot save himself, nor can the Law save him. The Law only diagnoses the human predicament and brings it into the consciousness of man so that he may know it and despair. The Law, says Luther, is the guardian which leads us toward Christ, which makes us aware of the predicament to which Christ is the only answer. The Law makes us cry out not "How shall I deliver myself?" but "Who shall deliver me?" The Law therefore creates the expectation of the Savior, the Messiah.

At this point, Luther continues, one can see only the wrathful, demanding face of God. It is only when one has understood and been shattered by the demand of righteousness that one can receive the Christ. Christ could not come to the pagans, because they did not understand the problem. Christ could come only to the Jew, for the Jew knew what man's problem is; he knew the righteousness of God and he knew the estrangement from God which came from human sinfulness. It is only in self-consciousness of this situation that man can receive the Gospel.

The good news is that God came out of the divine depths, from behind his wrath, from a deeper level in himself than his righteousness. From the very center of his being God came in

disguise, hidden in manhood, weak, without resort to any power of this world—the sword, the police, the law. In Christ Jesus, God by a breathtaking act of love and humility took upon himself the whole human lot, coming himself under the wrath of God. He identifies himself with sinful man, and therefore with the situation upon which the wrath of God falls, he becomes a man; therefore he comes under the spell of death, and must die. This is the great act of justification. God treats man as though man were not an enemy of God. God treats man as though man were not ungodly and unrighteousness; he puts man in the right despite the fact that man is not in the right; and he does so at the price of this kind of self-humiliation.

Faith, says Luther, is the total movement of the total man—the will, the mind, the emotions, the whole self—toward this God who is hidden in Christ to the eyes of the world, but who is seen as God to the eyes of faith. Faith is the simple casting of oneself upon God in absolute trust. By God's act of justification in Christ, and by the human response of faith, there comes a new relationship to God that only Christianity can bring.

Trust—faith in God in Christ—is therefore the whole Christian life; there is nothing other than faith. It is not limited to intellectual assent; it is not limited to one area of the Christian life; faith is the whole Christian life.

On this point I sometimes think Luther is most profound of all, for he says, in effect: "I cannot even be sorry for my sins until I have first loved. Therefore the repentance I had under the Law was a false repentance; it was a repentance born out of my fear for myself under God; it was born of egotism. It is like the medieval attrition—sorrow begotten out of fear of consequences. So also this wrathful face of God was the false face of God; but it was the only face I could see as a non-Christian. But God is not strange and alien. He is seen as wrathful because of his righteousness and our sin; but the last truth about God is not wrath but love. God loves us by Christ." The Christian can therefore see God's opposition to his sin as being an act of love.

The love of God is not indulgent, but austere, wanting of the beloved the highest he can achieve, and it will be content with nothing less. God enters the depths of the human heart and creates a new man in a new relationship to himself. It is this new inner man, who lives by faith and is daily re-created by the personal encounter with God—this new Christian creature—who must live out his life under the framework of order and justice, in the midst of this coercive society of human beings.

The Cross is set right in the heart of the Christian life, at every moment.

The Church is the community of those who have this faith, this relationship to God. It is a very personal and intimate fellowship, where we love each other in the depths of our being. This is the *communio sanctorum,* the community of saints—those people consecrated and set apart unto God.

All this is very Augustinian, but it is more Biblical. Luther has abandoned the Greek philosophical framework and gone back to the Hebrew framework for his understanding of the New Testament. In Luther, and in the whole Reformation, the vocabulary of Christianity again becomes personal. One does not speak of grace as some metaphysical power received through sacraments described in rationalistic and mechanistic terms; and one no longer identifies the true Church with the great sociological institution, the visible body of all baptized Christians. Now everything is concerned with the play of the personal on the personal, the encounter of the personal God with the personal human, and the encounter of personal humans with personal humans. The Reformation recovers the New Testament experience of God.

Alongside the fellowship of the faithful in Luther's scheme of things there stands the State. And one must live one's life under the State also: one lives one's inner life in the Church, and one's outer life in the web of society under the State.

The State, says Luther, has its direct authority as a restraining and ordering, coercive power straight from God. There, in the State, God works his great order and maintains his creation by the arm which wields the sword, the State. Here, in the

Church, God works his salvation in the inner depths of the human heart without any resort to this world's power, and by the winsomeness of the crucified Christ. The word of the Church to its members is, therefore: Insomuch as you are a citizen, obey the State; and if the State commands you to do that which becomes intolerable to the human conscience, resist passively—be a martyr.

The Protestant man demanded by Luther is a very mature man. He can face his God naked of any pretension. In Christ he can know the terrors of God's righteousness; and he has found on the anvil of his own experience the mysterious love of God, hidden in the humanity of Christ and him crucified, and has made his personal response.

Protestantism asks that this experience be communicated to every living individual. It is a herculean task. We can no longer deal with great masses simply through the mechanism of sacramental systems, through Church politics, and so forth. Every man must be led into this experience so that his inner being is caught and lifted unto God by God's mighty act. Every man has to learn that Christ died for *him.*

It is out of this necessity that the Western ideal of education for every person flows. In our civilization the education of every man was attempted in order that he could read the Scriptures and know the Gospel. One can say that if Protestant culture has failed—and we cannot lightly say that it has not failed —it is failing because it strove so high and tried for such a great thing.

The Calvinist version

Calvinism, the second great form of classical Protestantism, accepts everything Luther has stated. Nevertheless, there is a great difference between Luther and John Calvin. For Luther the Christian man is he who is living out the Cross at every moment of his existence in the nearly unbearable tension between the inner life and life in the world. The broken man upon the Cross—Jesus Christ and him crucified, as God in action in love—is the center of Lutheran Christianity.

For Calvin, on the other hand, the central truth about God and his dealing with man lies not in the crucified Christ, but in the majestic glory and omnipotence of God. Accordingly the Calvinist man is not the broken man, living out the tension of the Cross at the center of his being, but he is man set within the power of God to transform the world into obedience to God.

The resulting three currents

If one looks at the modern world in the light of this distinction, one sees a partial explanation of many things. In cultures dominated by Catholicism (such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, and South America) there is a slow-down in the dynamics of history, a curtailment of progress in empirical science, industrial development, and equalitarian democracy. But at the same time the power of evil is checked, so that even Italian fascism was not so terrible and demonic as was Nazism.

In a Lutheran Ethos the culture and the State are left autonomous. The power of Christian life is thrown into society, allowing science, art, and literature to flourish. At the same time, with no ecclesiastical restraint, the culture and the State are free to become first secular, then demonic, as they did in Germany.

A third state of affairs occurs in Calvinist cultures—Switzerland, Holland, Britain, and to a great extent the United States. Here one sees stamina, strong individualism, and a steady struggle for social justice; all this has allied itself with secular equalitarian democracy. One can also see how Calvinism can tend, as it did in New England, toward a church-dominated state. In this aspect Calvinism is a return within Protestantism to a Catholic conception both of the Church and of the Church's relationship to society, but it has a greater sense of the possibilities for the transformation of society. It is not surprising that in the nineteenth century the Social Gospel, which was the recovery of the social concern of Biblical religion in our modern culture, should come first out of Calvinist Christianity.

The Rise of Secularism and the Second Fall of Man

A. The Christian Renaissance—St. Francis

O most high, almighty, good Lord God, to thee belong praise, glory, honor, and all blessing!

Praised be my Lord God with all his creatures, and especially for our brother the sun, who brings us the day and who brings us the light; fair is he and shines with a very great splendor: O Lord, he signifies to us thee!

Praised be my Lord for our sister the moon, and for the stars, the which he hath set clear and lovely in heaven.

Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and cloud, calms and all weather by the which thou upholdest life in all creatures.

Praised be my Lord for our sister water, who is very serviceable unto us and humble and precious and clean.

Praised be my Lord for our mother the earth, the which doth sustain us and keep us, and bringeth forth divers fruits and flowers of many colors, and grass.

Praised be my Lord for all those who pardon one another for his love's sake, and who endure weakness and tribulation; blessed are they who peaceably shall endure, for thou, O most Highest, shalt give them a crown.

Praised be my Lord for our sister, the death of the body, from which no man escapeth. Woe to him who dieth in mortal sin! Blessed are they who are found walking by thy most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to do them harm.

Praise ye and bless the Lord, and give thanks unto him and serve him with great humility.

This is "The Canticle to the Sun," attributed to, and certainly representing, St. Francis of Assisi in 1225. Here is one of the first and loveliest signs of the Christian Renaissance, a movement that had been gestating in medieval culture for a long time. It contains a radically new attitude toward what we moderns call physical nature. The problem of classical man, you will recall, was that he was too burdened with his involvement in nature. His inner, immaterial, rational selfhood was incarcerated in flesh and was subject to all the woes of existence, and finally to the pain of death.

In the flowering Christianity of the Middle Ages, nature was received into the fellowship of Christian man, without fear, as a brother. "Brother sun," "sister moon," "brother fire," and even "sister death," says St. Francis. When St. Francis preached to the birds he was not being a sentimental romanticist. Nature is a beloved creature of God, and St. Francis takes it into his bosom as he takes death unto himself as a fellow creature of God. Because the "second death" (damnation) has been removed, man can embrace the first death, the death of the body, as a decree of the God whom he trusts absolutely.

In this attitude is the consummation of medieval Christianity, the culmination of the whole great struggle which had been going on between Biblical Christianity and the classical Greek understanding of life as found in both Plato and Aristotle. Here is the birth of the modern world, the birth of that conception of man's relationship to nature which underlies our naturalistic conception in the realm of art, our experimental science, and our conception of progress in history.

Any elementary course in the history of Western art tells us that all naturalistic concern begins with the thirteenth-century Italian painters Cimabue and Giotto. It was they who painted the frescoes in the Franciscan church at Assisi; they were imbued with the Franciscan spirit. Before them the people in painted pictures are set against the background, not of physical

nature, but of eternity. There are no trees, animals, rocks, or buildings; the background is pure gold. The figures are two-dimensional, fragile, other-worldly, gently ascetic, rising above all human concerns. Try to get one of these people to look at you; they look through you and beyond. They come from eternity and they are going to eternity; they are pilgrims here.

Then with Cimabue and Giotto, comes Renaissance naturalism. We begin to get three-dimensionalism, a human countenance, muscles. The gold-leaf background begins to have queer-looking little hillocks and rocks and sprigs of trees; animals begin to appear. When you get to Botticelli (1447-1510) art moves out of the sphere of Christian figures and Christian stories into Greek classicism. In the Birth of Venus, for instance, everything is very three-dimensional; very natural figures are portrayed—men and women who can be admired and loved in a human way. Nature is very much as modern Western man sees it, but there is still a trace of the old two-dimensional, spiritual conception.

Finally, look at the High Renaissance art of Raphael (1483-1520). Take the Alba Madonna, for instance. Here is a buxom, healthy, strong, vital madonna; here are perfectly formed infants, Jesus and St. John the Baptist; in the background are smooth rolling hills, a quiet river, beautiful blue sky. Nature is no longer a foe, but a friend. Because man is secure in God's life along with nature, God's creation, man is also secured comfortably and serenely in nature. All the demonic power of nature has been withdrawn; it is gentle, flowing, quiet—man's servant in God. This is the kind of nature modern man talks about when he says that he can commune with God better in nature than he can in church. Of course! This is *Christian* nature that he is talking about, with the sting removed by Christian civilization.

It is easy to see what happened to the spirit of Western man and how he literally saw things differently from any other man who had ever lived. Look at the difference between this and the art of the age of Pericles—it is the difference between the dynamic and the static. Look at the ceiling of the Sistine

Chapel: flowing, powerful, dynamic. Compare this with Japanese art, Chinese art, or primitive art with its demonic forms.

Isn't it silly to think that everybody sees nature the same way? Isn't it pretentious to universalize our Western consciousness and identify it with *human* consciousness? And yet this is the mistake that we have made. The fall of this second Adam came when Western, Christian, Catholic man said: "I am natural man, not man made by God through the Christian religion by the action of God's spirit on me through the Christian church—just *man*."

So he set out to be just himself, and only in the bitter end of that period, when he found that he was becoming a terrible self, did it ever occur to him that he might have been wrong. Maybe he was not just natural man. Maybe he was Christian man and could not stay like that save in Christianity.

It is no accident of history that Roger Bacon (1214-1294) was a Franciscan friar, and that he was the first, so far as I know, to use the phrase and the conception of "experimental science." "The end of all true philosophy," he wrote, "is to arrive at a knowledge of the Creator through knowledge of the external world." To this end, he was a firm believer in mathematics and experimentation. He certainly used both microscope and telescope, and he may have invented them.

Nor was it any accident of history that the first great philosophy of history after Augustine, and the one which is basic to all modern understanding of history, was written by Joachim of Floris, who died in 1202. He was a contemporary of St. Francis whose point of view was received by the Franciscans and made into a revolutionary philosophy of history with which they attacked the imperialism of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II and the hierarchism of the Roman Catholic Church.

Interpreting the Book of Revelation and the Bible as a whole, Joachim gave history three ages: the first was from Adam to Christ, and was the age of law; the second was from Christ to 1260 A.D. and was the age of the clerical Church; the third age, which was to begin in 1260 was the age of the Holy Spirit. Joachim equated this age with the millennium prophesied in the

Book of Revelation, the thousand-year reign of Christ through his saints. But this was not the end, the consummation of everything; it was a prelude to the consummation. So medieval man, ensconced in God through the mercy and grace of God in Christ, not only rode high and free above nature and took it into fellowship with himself, but he was no longer afraid of change. He looked expectantly toward a new and better age which was nevertheless something short of the ultimate consummation.

In Joachim and his followers was born the idea of progress, a radically new idea that, apart from the prophetic religious tradition, had never existed on the face of the earth before. And I suspect it will not exist very long unless it is sustained by a profoundly Christian culture. For unless I mistake the signs, it is no longer possible for an intelligent man to believe in the doctrine of progress which was so current in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

To sum up, now, what have we said about the birth of Christian humanism—and the very first roots of secularism:

In and through the Gospel and the Church God created in history a new culture and a new type of cultural man, who had a new attitude toward God, a new attitude toward sub-human nature, and a new attitude toward time. So far as I can see, this man and his attitudes are unique in all human history. To put this mythically, God in Christ reached into history and lifted man up unto himself. It was only by the thirteenth century that man became so secure in his union with God that his fear of nature and of nature's cycle of birth and death was overcome. Only then could man take up his divinely appointed role, and, set within the love and dynamic action of God, begin to be lord over nature, fashioning it to divine and human ends.

In Luther, in Calvin, and in St. Francis we see Christian man turning back toward the world as a divine creation to express the reign of God in all the relationships of life, both those between men and those between men and nature. We said that in Calvinism this is most explicit, most sturdy and courageous. We saw in St. Francis and Franciscanism the whole turning of

the spirit of Western Christian man, down toward nature and forward to the future with expectancy. By this we do not mean that Franciscanism is to be isolated from everything else. It is simply that here is the break-through and clear articulation of a power at work within the whole culture. On the side of the attitude toward physical nature which makes possible experimental science, it is that force which gives birth to Copernicus and Kepler and Galileo and the others, and which gives us Renaissance naturalism in art. On the side of the attitude toward history, it is the force which gives us the forward thrust of expectancy.

Perhaps the almost perfect example of early Christian Renaissance man is Leonardo da Vinci. I quote from Sir William Dampier's *A History of Science:*

"Leonardo was the natural son of a lawyer of great vigour and some eminence, Ser Piero da Vinci, and a peasant girl named Catarina. He was born at Vinci, between Florence and Pisa, in the year 1452, and was educated by his father. He entered successively the courts of Florence, Milan, and Rome, and died in 1519 in France, the servant and friend of Francis I. In early life he showed the remarkable qualities which impressed both contemporaries and men of later ages as being sufficient to place him in a class apart from the rest of mankind. Beauty of person and charm of manner did but adorn and increase the power of mind and force of character which took all knowledge for its study and all art for its expression. A painter, sculptor, engineer, architect, physicist, biologist and philosopher was Leonardo, and in each role he was supreme. Perhaps no man in the history of the world shows such a record. His performance, extraordinary as it was, must be reckoned as small compared with the ground he opened up, the grasp of fundamental principles he displayed, and the insight with which he seized upon the true methods of investigation in each branch of enquiry. If Petrarch was the harbinger of the literary Renaissance, Leonardo led the way in other departments. He was not a scholastic, neither was he a blind follower of classical authority, as were many of the men of the Renaissance. To him observation

of nature and experiment were the only true methods of science. Knowledge of the ancient writers, useful as a starting point, could never be conclusive."

B. The Beginning of Secularism—Descartes

It is from that Renaissance spirit, so admirably focused and magnified in Leonardo, that Copernicus and Kepler and Galileo sprang. I want to call your attention now to Galileo with a further quote from Dampier: "The first and most difficult step in mathematical dynamics was taken by Galileo, the step which passed from the vague teleological categories, into which Scholasticism analysed change and movement, to the definite mathematical concepts of time and space."

Let me illustrate that very briefly: Galileo was not interested in what the scholastics had been interested in—*why* bodies fall. They had always answered that bodies fall because they are heavy. If you asked what "heaviness" was, they offered a description in terms of the fact that bodies fall! Galileo, on the other hand, was interested in *how* bodies fall. By experiment and by hypothesis tested by experiment he discovered that bodies fall with a speed that is in ratio to time. He began to state definitive mathematical relationships which exist between motion and time. In other connections, he distinguishes between what he thinks is truly objective and resident in the object of research—primary qualities—and secondary qualities, ones which disappear when the observer disappears. The first are mass, volume, figure, weight—all of which can be described in terms of mathematical relationships. Such qualities as color, taste, and odor, he regarded as secondary.

Galileo is best known in popular history for his partly successful attempt to demonstrate the truth of the Copernican theory. Here he showed the world that its naïve sense perception of reality is not to be trusted: our senses seem to indicate that brother sun goes around the earth; but this is not true, for the earth goes around the sun. Similarly, that which we see in

external reality as being a compound of quantity and quality is not really that. The only thing that is certain is that it is quantity, which can be known only by experimental science, and the knowledge can be phrased only in mathematical relationships.

The effects of Galileo's discovery were numerous, but the one which interests us is the fact that it completely undermined man's confidence in the perception of his senses. Here, in the spirit which expresses itself through Galileo, and through many others, is a new conception of the cleavage between the self and the world outside the self. Here is a new conception about the subjective and the objective. Finally, here is a new way of attempting to overcome the cleavage between man and his environment.

René Descartes, a French engineer with the Dutch army, gave classical expression to this cleavage in his philosophical system, and set the framework for the whole of modern thought. He had been educated by the Jesuits, but he completely rejected Scholasticism as a meaningless pyramid of terminology. Yet he presupposed the whole security of the human spirit, an action which is very characteristic of seventeenth-century man —because he was Christian man. He presupposed the whole Christian idea of God, the truths of Christianity, and the reality of the Church. And he devoted quite a bit of his time to demonstrating the truth of the Church's doctrine of the Eucharist.

Descartes' *Discourse on Method* is familiar to every student of philosophy, and his project is known to almost all who know the history of thought. He reasoned like this: As a philosopher I must find that which is absolutely and unquestionable certain. What is it? It is not that the people out on the street are actually there, for they might simply be hallucinations of my mind. After all, I dream about people like them when I dream in my sleep. By the same reasoning I cannot say that the table is here or that books are on those shelves. I can doubt all of that and doubt it radically. In fact, I must even go to the extent of saying that every idea in my mind may be put there by some evil and

demonic spirit, so it may be all an illusion. How can I arrive at any certain fact? How can I find any trustworthy truth or any trustworthy knowledge?

Descartes, of course, came to the conclusion that the one certainty was the "I" that doubts. For one could not doubt the reality of anything unless there were something that did the doubting.

Let us look at some of the problems he has raised. First, this "I" of Descartes' dictum "I think, therefore I am," is an abstract, intellectual conception of the self. In the second place, from this basic personal certainty, Descartes tried to deduce the objectivity of everything. Everything, he said, starts from me as an individual, and everything relies for its existence upon me. Then Descartes cleared himself of charges of omnipotence by saying that the only certainties are those which come to the thinking "I" with clear perception. What comes with clear perception? Only one thing: God.

Descartes argued this way: I have an idea of God. This idea is of one than whom there can be no greater. He is perfect, infinite, absolutely good, omniscient, etc. Therefore the opposite side of my awareness of myself as finite and imperfect is my awareness of God. God is the one clear, unmistakable perception of the human mind. And I cannot trust any of my unclear sense perceptions of the objective world; it can be known only through experimental science and described in the language of mathematics.

That is how Descartes re-created, you might say, objective reality from his presuppositions. Notice his unconscious assumptions. In the first place, he has the idea of God because he is a man whose ideas come from the Christian culture around him. He assumes that this God has the attributes that the Christian religion says he has—not the attributes that the Buddhist says gods have. Then, with the faith that God will not deceive him and will give him some rapport with external reality, Descartes finds that rapport in experimental science whose language is mathematics. All his presuppositions come to him out of the Christian culture, and he is completely unaware of them

as such. He thinks his demonstration is based on pure reason.

In a way, this is the beginning of the Enlightenment: one's knowledge of the existence of God and of external reality depends upon the light of human reason, which becomes normative for all knowledge.

Alfred North Whitehead, the modern philosopher of organism, criticises all this from the standpoint of his acceptance of life as a basic category. In *Science in the Modern World* he has this to say about the seventeenth-century contribution to thought:

"Nature is a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colorless—merely the hurrying of material, aimlessly, meaninglessly. However you disguise it, this is the practical outcome of the characteristic scientific philosophy which closed the seventeenth century. No alternative system of organizing the pursuit of scientific truth has been suggested. It is not only reigning, but is without a rival; and yet it is quite unbelievable. This conception of the universe is surely framed in terms of high abstraction, and the paradox only arises because we have mistaken our abstractions for concrete reality. The seventeenth century had finally produced a scheme of scientific thought, framed by mathematicians for the use of mathematicians. The greatest characteristic of the mathematical mind is its capacity for dealing with abstractions, and for eliciting from them clear-cut, demonstrative trains of reasoning, fairly satisfactory so long as it is those abstractions which you want to think about. The enormous success of the scientific abstractions, yielding on the one hand matter, with its simple location in time and space, and on the other hand mind, perceiving, suffering, reasoning, but not interfering, has foisted onto philosophy the task of accepting them as the most concrete rendering of fact. Thereby modern philosophy has been ruined."

C. The Implicit Crisis—Subjectivity

Forever afterward in the West the great problem of philosophy was how these two realities mind and matter, are re-

lated. Is the universe a dualism consisting of both mind and matter? Or can you reduce the whole mental aspect of reality into matter (the answer of materialism)? Or, further, can you reduce matter into mentality, spirit, or whatever you call the immaterial aspect (the answer of idealism)?

One of the impossible questions presented was how mind and matter interact. How, for instance, does mind tell body what to do? Descartes wrestled with this one and thought he had solved it by inventing a third element. It was a kind of animal fluid or animal spirits, material enough to make contact with matter for our spirits, and yet spiritual enough to have influence upon our spirit on behalf of matter. But this satisfied nobody save Descartes. Geulincx, one of his disciples, quite honestly said that the only way you can get mind and matter together is through an external intervention of God. Geulincx believed that this intervention, this "miracle," was wrought at every moment of personal existence.

It is not hard to see how out of this view can come the idea (which is no longer even questioned by our modern culture) that a miracle is an intervention of a God external to a machine which has its own inner laws, a great intervention into a self-enclosed, self-working, self-ordering machine. The truth here is that everything is so completely twisted and distorted that nobody can think straight again for a long time. Infected by such views, one receives what the Church says through a distorting medium, and Christianity begins to be transformed into a new and incredible kind of thing, even by its own believers.

In Descartes and his colleagues, Western man already evinces the possibility of his tragedy in the twentieth century. Remember that this is Christian man, who in the security of his relationship to God was able to turn back toward sub-human nature and to ask how it works, to learn to apprehend it by experimental science, and to describe it by mathematics. As he does so he undermines man's naïve grasp of things and leaves the suggestion (which has become an important key to our modern minds) that experimental science is the one true way to

any kind of knowledge. Moreover, he bequeaths to the world the new problem of mind and matter, and the concept of an "I" doomed to greater doubt. Man will have no security about his knowledge of anything because he becomes so subjective and is so radically divorced from the world of objects.

Thus seventeenth-century man moves rapidly toward the crisis of self-distrust, aware of his subjectivity, and of his error in apprehending his outside world. One can already feel implicit in Descartes the despair of the modern French Existentialists. For the knowledge of God now depends upon being a clear and distinct idea, immediately and directly apprehensible by the mind. But what if I don't have that clear and distinct idea? Then I'm in a crisis of subjectivity; I am alone, and in despair.

D. The New Knowledge

The great apostle of the new method of knowledge, experimental or empirical science, was Francis Bacon. He was the preacher of the new dawn of man. He was not a mathematician, philosopher, or experimental scientist. He was merely an educated man and statesman who made it his life work to convert the Western world. He proclaimed the good news that nature was a great machine, dark and unknowable directly, but knowable with absolute accuracy through experimental science, and, in principle, completely knowable.

Like Descartes, Bacon has no sense of the insecurity, loneliness, distrust, and the crisis of subjectivity which is to come. He is secure, confident in reason, and optimistic about all that science shall bring to man in terms of both knowledge and power over nature. Like Descartes, he was seventeenth-century man—that is, still a medieval Christian. Bacon is comparable in the field of philosophy to Raphael in art. Nature has been seen anew through Christian eyes. It is received as a friend, not a foe; it is something to be examined, to be understood, and to be used. But it is still the creation of God.

Sir Francis Bacon—the missionary

For us in the twentieth century Bacon presents something of a paradox by combining reverence for the new scientific method with an awareness that it threatens his religious outlook. One of his principal concerns is to define the relationship of religion and science so that neither one need interfere with the other. Bacon makes war, it is true, on scholastic theology. But it is a war on the deductive method of arriving at factual knowledge and a defense of the inductive method of reaching hypotheses. Thus, his fight is not against Christianity itself, but against scholastic philosophy insomuch as it opposed the coming of science. Similarly, he was strongly against the kind of censorship which Pope Urban VIII imposed on Galileo's defense of Copernican astronomy. The Pope took the position that Galileo's book was contrary to religion; therefore Galileo was to recant, and the book was to be modified before permission to read it would be granted.

Sir Thomas Browne—the dilemma

If Bacon seems bound to defend science from religion, Sir Thomas Browne appears concerned with protecting religion from the new scientific method, although it is quite clear that he is a lover of both. Browne, a physician and late contemporary of Bacon, was equally at home in experimental science, classical culture, and the Christian religion. He is fully aware of the tensions abuilding between science and religion. The struggle as the world is to know it for several centuries to come is already present in his words.

"I take great delight," he wrote, "in putting to flight Satan when he tempts me to doubt the Biblical revelation." Satan says that Elijah may have used some chemical combination to start the fire on the altar on Mt. Carmel (I Kings 18). Satan suggests that the creation was not done in six days. But Browne always manages to banish Satan with the words of Tertullian: "It is certain, because it is impossible."

"Methinks there be not impossibilities enough in Religion for an active faith [writes Browne in *The Religion of a Doctor*]; the deepest Mysteries ours contains have not only been illustrated, but maintained by Syllogism and the rule of Reason. I love to lose myself in Mystery, to pursue my Reason to an *O altitudo!* 'Tis my solitary recreation to pose my apprehension with those involved Aenigmas and riddles of the Trinity, with the Incarnation, and Resurrection. I can answer all the Objections of Satan and my rebellious Reason with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian, *Certum est, quia impossibile est.* I desire to exercise my faith in the difficultest point; for to credit ordinary and visible objects is not faith, but perswasion."

In less than a century the dimension of mystery would disappear entirely, and the Church's theologians would be writing books such as *Christianity Without Mystery;* Immanuel Kant would be writing *Religion Within the Bounds of Pure Reason!*

When Browne champions the new method he manages to keep religion on his side:

"The World was made to be inhabited by Beasts, but studied and contemplated by Man: 'tis the debt of our reason we owe to God, and the homage we pay for not being Beasts. Without this, the World is still as though it had not been, or as it was before the sixth day, when as yet there was not a Creature that could conceive or say there was a World. The Wisdom of God receives small honour from those vulgar heads that rudely stare about, and with a gross rusticity admire His works; those highly magnifie Him, whose judicious inquiry into His Acts, and deliberate research into His Creatures, return the duty of a devout and learned admiration."

In Sir Thomas' soul religion and the science of nature stood side by side; and they were, in a way, two unrelated fields. "Thus there are two Books from whence I collect my Divinity," he said. "Besides that written one of God, another of His servant Nature, that universal and publick Manuscript, that lies expans'd unto the Eyes of all." Browne goes on to say—and all

the Renaissance people thought this—that experimental science had been learned from the pagans, especially from Democritus and even from Aristotle (although they were not very fond of him because of his identification with the scholastics).

"Nor do I so forget God [he continues] as to adore the name of Nature; which I define, not with the schools, to be the principle of motion and rest, but that streight and regular line, that settled and constant course the Wisdom of God hath ordained the action of His creatures according to their several kinds. To make a revolution every day is the Nature of the Sun, because of that necessary course which God hath ordained it, from which it cannot swerve but by a faculty from that voice which first did give it motion."

Here for a few last moments in the seventeenth century the early experimental scientists are so full of Christianity that they can say what is said very rarely by scientists to come: that when I trace out the laws of nature I am but thinking the thoughts of God after him, I am but seeing the regularity of God's behavior in nature. But these moments could not endure, for there was included an unresolved conflict that was to shake the whole of Christendom. It was called the warfare of science and religion.

Seventeenth-century men were so firmly set within the climate of Christianity, and their culture was so deeply Christian, that it never occurred to them to doubt Christianity. They were undermining it, they were attenuating it and thinning it out, but they didn't realize it. They were quite unaware that they were preparing our culture for the final eruption of unbelief, for the destruction of the whole Christian scheme which they themselves professed.

Thomas Hobbes—the materialistic side

Thomas Hobbes was a particularly good example of seventeenth-century man, and it is from him that we have a famous materialist solution of the Cartesian dilemma of mind and matter. Everything, he explained, is material. Everything is

motion, mass, weight, volume, extension. Of course, man has a mind. But mind itself is a kind of reflection of the play of materialistic forces, and thinking itself is a materialistic motion; and here he anticipates modern psychological behaviorism.

Now how in the world could a man be a radical materialist without being aware that he is flying in the face of Biblical Christianity? For Hobbes, it was fairly simple. Materialism gave him a new slant on the Bible, and he discovered things that many seventeenth-century Christians had missed. He discovered that in the Bible man is mortal, not immortal. He discovered that the Bible does not talk about the immortality of the soul, but about the resurrection of the body. The whole materialistic side of the Bible came clear to him. (You must remember, as the late Archbishop of Canterbury put it, that Christianity is the most materialistic of all living religions—very anti-spiritual and anti-idealist.)

The question of free will and determinism also gives Hobbes little difficulty. If my mind is the product of mechanical forces, you ask, on what authority can I believe in anything—the State, the civil ruler, the Bible, or Christianity itself?

Every event, answers Hobbes, is caused by a prior event, so that there is a regression of causes which moves back inevitably to a first cause. Therefore, he says, Biblical predestinationism is absolutely correct. But now Biblical predestinationism is given a Newtonian, scientific, cause-and-effect interpretation. It means only that God, the first cause, made a great material machine which relentlessly fulfills its nature, and plows out the events of history, including the decisions of human beings like you and me.

There is a very interesting passage in his *Leviathan* in which Hobbes pretends to reconcile this materialistic view with free will:

" 'Liberty' and 'necessity' are consistent, as in the water that hath not only 'liberty,' but a 'necessity' of descending by the channel; so likewise in the actions which men voluntarily do: which, because they proceed from their will, proceed from

'liberty'; and yet, because every act of man's will, and every desire and inclination proceedeth from some cause, and that from another cause, in a continual chain, whose first link is in the hand of God and the first of all causes, proceed from 'necessity.' So that, to him who could see the connections of those causes, the 'necessity' of all men's voluntary actions would appear manifest."

This kind of philosophical or mechanical determinism is what the modern understands religious predestination to be, and any reconciliation of it with free will is as inscrutable as Hobbes's statement.

Recently, at a visit to a university, a student told me that a psychologist had said to his class: "If all the facts could be known, it would be clear to every one of you that you have no alternative to being here." The apparent voluntarism by which the students arose from bed, ate breakfast, and came to class is simply an illusion. It is easy to see how such modern ideas were first worked out in the seventeenth century. For Hobbes the Bible was simply the documentation of the predestinating action of God, which is the materialistic causation of the machines (and students) created by God.

Cambridge Platonism—the idealist side

During the time when Hobbes and the other underminers of Christianity were doing their work so unwittingly and well, we must not forget that the great classical forms of Christianity, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist—still dominated the minds of the masses of people. And in reaction to the extreme materialism of Hobbes the Cambridge Platonists emerged to defend Christianity within the framework of the seventeenth-century mind. They went back to Plato and asserted the priority of reason over matter, the freedom of the human being to will and to do, and man's obligation to assert himself over his passions and over physical nature. They insisted steadily throughout the century that the pure in heart could, by the discipline of communion with God, maintain religion against the

attack of the new scientific method. Still, they did not deny the method. Like Sir Thomas Browne, they thought it was an obligation of the Christian to pursue the new knowledge.

John Locke—Deistic common sense

Meanwhile the corrosive ideas to which we have given our attention are growing strong, championed by the intellectuals of the day. The culmination comes in John Locke, "the Father of English Empiricism" (1632-1704), who set the framework of thought for intellectuals in the whole of the eighteenth century. It is Locke whom we encounter in Thomas Jefferson. Locke is the classical formulator of eighteenth-century deism. It is from the ambiguities of Locke that a good many of our modern problems arise.

Locke blends all the elements of his century together, as it were, in a matrix of good English common sense. He solves many of the major problems with common sense; and anything that common sense cannot solve is not worth bothering about. Is the mind material, as Hobbes said, or is it immaterial, as Descartes and the Cambridge Platonists said? "It is a point," says Locke, "which seems to me to be put out of the reach of our knowledge." Locke accepted the Cartesian split between subjective mind and external reality, knowable through empirical science. Mind itself was a *tabula rasa* on which experience impressed the ideas which give us knowledge.

Locke believed that all knowledge is gained in one of three ways: by intuition, sense-perception, and demonstration. He is quite aware of the dilemma which Descartes raised about the senses, and he believes that the only way to get really accurate knowledge is through empirical science. But, says Locke, common sense overcomes the terrible feeling that you don't really know what is out there: it is easy to distinguish between the *idea* that one is in the fire and *being* in the fire. Intuition, on the other hand, gives Locke a direct knowledge of relationships between ideas which he says are intrinsic to the mind as the result of experience; the notion that black and white are opposites comes in this way.

Demonstration is a more indirect route to knowledge, in which logical thought plays a vital part. This is the way Locke solves mathematical problems; it also leads him to God.

See how far the corrosion and the undermining have gone! For Descartes, God was merely the opposite side of man's awareness of his ability to think, the idea that came most clearly to the thinking "I"; now, for Locke, the existence of God emerges from the reasoning and common sense of the human mind. You can see how the whole universe has been up-ended. Medieval man was sure of his own existence because he knew God; John Locke now makes you sure of God's existence because you start with yourself, and then by a logical argument you move to the demonstrable truth that God exists.

This is deism. One reasons from the clock to the clockmaker; God becomes the abstract product of rational thought, derived "reasonably" from the order of nature. (According to the Declaration of Independence, we revolted in the name of the "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God." This is straight from Locke.)

In some quarters this argument for God is still current, and it is still as phony as ever, for there is no way to demonstrate in the series of causations a first cause which is itself uncaused. This rationalization of the Christian doctrine of creation helps perpetuate hopeless argument about God's existence, and points up the sad fact that the immediacy of Christian religious experience has been lost—today, as in the eighteenth century. Modern man no longer expects religious experience; he trusts his own reason and his own common sense. But when religious experience returns to him, it is not Christian experience, but primitive, demonic, and idolatrous. It sends him to the psychiatrist or to the Nazi and Communist movements. So the deism of Locke first moves to secular unbelief and then to idolatry.

Sometimes, Locke sounds very orthodox. He wrote quite a bit in the field of theology, and he believed, he said, in revelation. He believed that the great deposit of revelation was in the Bible, that there you had the revealed truth. But how is one to read the Bible in order to understand which is the truth?

With reason, of course. Therefore reason becomes the only test of what is divine revelation and what is not. In fact, Locke believed that Biblical revelation was intended for the great mass of illiterate people who had not achieved the maturity of his common sense. The Bible, says Locke, speaks of God as having passions, love, ideas, as being a personal object among other personal objects, as someone who does things. This, says Locke, is only for the simple folk. God is not like that at all. Reason alone comprehends nature, structure, the universal character of things; God behaved the way he did in the Bible because folk in Biblical times were relatively unsophisticated.

In his common-sense view of the universe, Locke perceives that morality is demanded of man. Here he fits Jesus into the scheme of things, as a great ethical teacher and moral example. (Thomas Jefferson went further than Locke: he clipped out those parts of the Gospels which he thought important and published them as "The Teaching of Jesus.") Locke saw only one thing that Jesus contributed to Christianity which was not evident to reason itself: immortality. One need not live, therefore, only by the rational truth that virtue is its own reward, for there is a reward in the afterlife. That is the one thing Christianity does add to the picture for Locke. And this is not what Jesus meant at all.

John Locke was an honest man, though not a very brilliant one, and he did admit one other thing. While truth was apprehensible to reason, morality, he said, did not seem to have the same degree of accessibility to the great mass of men. Revelation is for the ignorant; natural reason is for the philosopher; but all of us need some revelatory confirmation about the principles of goodness and the need to be good. Therefore the primary function of Christianity is no longer to show people the truth, but to make people good.

Immanuel Kant—the solution by morality

The great apostle of religion as morality, and a dominating figure of the eighteenth century, was the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant. Convinced by the radical skepticism of the

contemporary Scottish philosopher David Hume that it was impossible to arrive at knowledge through the theoretical reason, Kant proceeded to destroy the arguments of Descartes and his followers which were based on "clear and distinct" ideas about God.

Kant's own arguments for the existence of God went something like this: The one sure and certain thing that man has is the categorical imperative—that is, the obligation to do the right. The obligation is based on the principle of equality: I can never permit myself to do anything that I would not agree is right for every other man to do in the same situation. Implicit in this moral imperative is the supposition that man *can* do the right, that he has the will to do it. Kant grounds everything religious upon man's moral sense. God becomes the guarantor of the moral conscience of man and the rewarder of man's obedience to the moral commandment. God and immortality, said Kant, are the only logical ways for the good to be finally vindicated—and it must be vindicated.

In his theory of knowledge Kant tried to bring into a kind of synthesis idealism and the extreme materialism of Hume. He disagreed with Locke's *tabula rasa* conception of the mind, saying that the mind is not merely a passive, clean slate, but contributes a great deal to our experience, namely, forms and shapes. For Kant, then, there are two worlds. There is the inner, mental, phenomenal world, which is known to the mind in ordered experiences. And there is the outer world whose objects you can know only through the forms and shapes the mind gives them. You can never know the object itself, the *Ding an sich*—the thing-in-itself. The only world with which man can really deal is the phenomenal world, the world of the mind. And it is in this world that one argues for the existence of God by means of practical reason.

Kant is thus ultimately an idealist who agrees that empirical science is the only source of theoretical knowledge and yet understands the subjective role played by the mind in relation to this knowledge. He gave a sledgehammer blow to the wedge which Galileo had inserted between man's mind and his grasp

of outer reality. For if I cannot know anything about the thing-in-itself, if my mind contributes something to experience, and if I do not know what is there apart from what my mind contributes, then everything I know may be purely subjective.

Kant thought he had shown that theoretical reason in all of its functions—contributing form to sensibility, making judgments about phenomena, and ordering those judgments under universal ideas—ended without ever grasping the objective world. The soul, the universe, and God are normative ideas unknowable by the theoretical reason. This leads Kant to the primacy of the practical reason and the phenomenal world. Man's will (and his sense of obligation to the moral imperative), safely housed in this phenomenal world, is his essential aspect, says Kant. Through it he is assured of God, the soul, immortality, and the universe.

As Kant says in his *Critique of Pure* [Theoretical] *Reason*: "Now I maintain that all attempts of reason to establish a theology by the aid of speculation alone are fruitless, that the principles of reason as applied to nature do not conduct us to any theological truths, and, consequently, that a rational theology can have no existence, unless it is founded upon the laws of morality."

In the twentieth century, we can clearly hear the overtones of Locke and Kant, as people say, "After all, doesn't Christianity boil down to the Sermon on the Mount?"

E. The Natural Harmony—Its Ambiguity

Pope's Newtonian light

> "Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in the night.
> God said, 'Let Newton be!' and all was light."

This couplet, from Alexander Pope's "Epitaphs," can stand spiritually, if not esthetically, for the eighteenth century, which owes its fundamental views to Locke, Hume, and Kant. This is the century of naturalism—of "nature-ism."

"Enlightenment" has come, says Pope; the dark ages are over;

Newton is the prophet of the dawning age when everything will be light. We look at this from quite a different perspective now. We look at the end product of Newton, the atomic bomb, and we're not so sure that this is the kind of light Pope was talking about. It may be very bright, but it is destructively bright. But for the eighteenth century the new power over nature was full of infinite promise.

Yet, even in this age there is an ambiguity about the word "nature" which becomes apparent when one tries to analyze its meaning for the great figures who put such trust in it. Pope, for instance, proclaims nature as a new revelation perceived by Newton through empirical science in its mathematical and uniform aspects. So man feels he is on the threshold of a new conquering of nature. And indeed, in a sense he was. But all this still stands within the Christian framework. Pope believes God is involved; God brought Newton as his prophet, as the instrument of the new revelation.

None of these eighteenth-century people can divorce themselves from the Christian ethos. We have already seen how Locke held on to Christianity (insofar as he understood it), and was unaware that he was undermining it. "The works of nature everywhere sufficiently evidence a Deity," he wrote. Joseph Addison, too, supposes that the majestic uniformity of physical nature perceived by human rationality will convince one of the existence of God. We may sing his great hymn today in a very different spirit, but we must remember that Addison was a disciple of Locke and that he wrote these words a few years after Locke's death.

"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
The unwearied Sun from day to day
Does his Creator's power display;
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand . . . "

This deity, so evident to reason, is by some strange and unconscious process identified with the God of the Christian tradition. Or, to put it another way, the Christian God is quite unconsciously transformed into a God who is directly knowable by reason in and through the physical universe. Christianity, Addison believes, might have been discovered in Timbuktu by any native who used his mind well. And the Church was very much involved in this attitude toward reason and nature. John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1691 to 1694, could actually say that all the Christian religion requires beyond the demands of natural reason is, first, that you assume your obligation to pray through the name of Christ, and second, that you be baptized and participate in the Lord's Supper.

Here is a profound trust in nature and a very profound trust in man's capacity to find its meaning. I do not know whether the eighteenth century in this dominant spirit rejoiced more in finding the uniform laws of nature or more in the natural reason of man which was able to discover them. I do not know whether the rejoicing was over the appearance of Newton or over the truth which he discovered. I suppose it was really over both. This is, after all, the century of Robinson Crusoe. Here is absolutely self-complete man, who can create on a desert island a whole culture, a whole civilization, out of his own ingenuity.

"The proper study of mankind is man," says Pope. If man will simply understand himself, everything will be all right. Thus the eighteenth century starts out with an almost unqualified confidence in man and nature. To these optimistic souls, we must remember, nature meant rationality and morality; it meant the objective universe which gave them the revelation of God who was very close to being the God of the Bible. From their standpoint he *was* that God. But nature has many aspects; it is powerful and self-devouring, it has a Nazi side as well as a divinely rational side. The eighteenth century was blind to the vital aspect of nature, which, though it will assert itself from time to time, will be suppressed, ignored, and neglected. Modern man has become a rationalist and a moralist,

until recently unable to understand the demands of this vitality in his own nature and in subhuman nature. The rationalistic neglect of this side of existence will take a terrible toll of man in the twentieth century.

Rousseau's naïve assumption

There are more ambiguities in the word "nature." Jean Jacques Rousseau, a contemporary of Kant and one of the most celebrated of nature prophets, felt that the whole development of human civilization, the whole history of man and his social institutions, had been a history of the deformation of human nature. The primary source of nature's meaning, he said, was not physical science or human rationality, but the human sentiments. Society had distorted these sentiments. Some people have taken Rousseau to mean that man should go back to nature, back behind his civilization and society to some sort of totalitarian, nudist-camp philosophy of life. Rousseau meant that man should break into the history of civilization with revolution and start off again with a new society which would not distort his own true nature.

Both the French and the Russian revolutions are implicit in Rousseau. He was the great prophet of the French Revolution, and, as we shall see, Marxism comes in part from this conception of nature and of democracy. Let original human nature develop all its potentialities freely, without interference from perverting social institutions, and all individual life will develop a natural harmony, giving each a maxium degree of liberty and self-fulfillment. A high degree of natural love—the natural brotherhood of man, fraternity—will spring forth, and there will follow automatically a completely equalitarian society. Liberty (which means primarily release from restraint and perversions of social institutions, particularly the State)—liberty, fraternity, and equality shall come, and we will move onward and upward to Utopia.

Now Rousseau means at least two things when he talks about nature. It is obvious that he speaks about the individual, about human nature. If you don't distort him with false social dogma,

says Rousseau, man will grow up like a beautiful plant, fulfilling his natural human goodness. But there is something else implicit in nature, something which brings everything into one glorious harmony, taking all the conflict out of life. Nature contains social concord. The unfolding of nature will bring a common social will, and this "general will" of the majority can be trusted.

So nature is both individual and social. And human society can be trusted, once it is started in the right direction after the old perverting institutions have been removed. No more naïve faith was ever expressed, and this was Karl Marx's faith, too. You would have no problems after the revolution; individuals and society would grow up naturally, like plants, toward Utopia. Thus, there was nothing in Marx that prepared the Communists for their post-revolutionary problems.

Adam Smith—Providence as the free market

Adam Smith, the Scottish economist, took the view of natural social concord a step further. It not only manifested itself in human nature as sympathy (the ability to have compassion for one's fellow man), but also in objective reality as the "law of harmony." This law, which could not be upset permanently, guaranteed that every individual, striving for his own self-fulfillment, would ultimately be in harmony with every other individual striving for *his* own self-fulfillment. Thus self-interest and community interest were identical!

There is, said Smith, a pre-established harmony which guarantees the ultimate collective good. The law of supply and demand is a part of this natural harmony. It regulates the self-centered thrusts of the individual by the automatic mechanisms of the free market, and brings everything back to normalcy and stability, ultimately benefiting everyone. Even that which looks for the moment like evil is really good in disguise. Or, as Pope put it:

> All nature is but art unknown to thee;
> All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;

All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good;
And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.

The belief in a natural harmony runs all through the eighteenth century. Our own nation was founded on this idea, that the laws of nature, which give us natural rights and natural duties, are perceivable by the natural reason, and fulfillable by every man who acknowledges the obligation. Now this is only a lingering hangover from the Christian period; it is a secularization of the Christian doctrine of Providence. And it is in a very precarious position, founded as it is on the ability of the human reason to find it somewhere in the structure of objective reality. It can be pushed over very easily, as indeed it is in the next century.

Note that none of these natural men—Locke's, Kant's, Pope's, Rousseau's—are anything like the natural men of Classical Greek culture, and they are certainly not like Confucian or Hindu natural man. For this man is the vestigial remnant of Christian man in the West; he was made by God through the agency of the Christian Church, but he has now long forgotten this, and he is poised on the brink of the abyss into which he shall soon begin to plunge.

The people of the eighteenth century did not know much history, for historical research as we know it had scarcely begun. So they had no real sense of the uniqueness of Western civilization. If they sensed it at all, they attributed it simply to the fact that Western man had developed his rational potentialities while other men had not. But the confidence of Western culture is really confidence in Christian man, who was formed through the agonizing years of development of Western culture under the control of the Holy Spirit through the Medieval Church. This Western man now strikes off the shackles of institutional Christianity, affirms himself, and faces the future without fear. This man now says he is natural man. He needs

no revelation, no divine influence in order to become what he is. He needs only his own reason, his own nature, and the nature of the universe.

These are the dogmas of the modern religion.

F. Salvation by Evolution or Revolution

Western culture is the only one which has written history. In classical Greek philosophy there appeared some writings called "histories," such as the works of Thucydides and Herodotus, but these are simply citations of events to illustrate particular philosophical points of view. Other cultures have had chronicles, legendary substantiations of their own values, but this is not what we mean by history. Our sense of history stems from the Bible, for only here is there found any meaning or purpose in the recorded passage of time.

Joachim's Christian beginning

As we have seen, the dynamic movement of history under God as it was portrayed in the Bible was stopped by the Augustinian view, which identified the hierarchial Catholic Church with the Millennium in the Book of Revelation. Short of the final Consummation, therefore, there was no new stage of human history to look forward to. From the standpoint of Augustine, who gave the basic theory of history to the whole Middle Ages, all that could be expected was the continuing Christianization of the culture—the consecration and purification of the Holy Roman Empire as a political order and of feudalism as a social and economic system. Then, in the early thirteenth century, Joachim of Floris, abbot of a monastery in southern Italy, broke the Augustinian interpretation by offering a new three-stage view of history, which dominated for a long time the philosophy of history in the West. One finds it in Hegel, Comte, and, in a way, in Marx.

The first, the Age of the Father, ran from the beginning to the time of Christ; the second, the Age of the Son, went until

1260 A.D.; Joachim identified the third, the Age of the Spirit, with the expectation of Jeremiah (31:31) of a new covenant, when the Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh. This outpouring would put every man in direct communion with God; consequently there would be no need for education, the Church, or political and economic institutions, and everyone would lead a free, harmonious, monastic life. So Western man for the first time could begin to look toward a better future. This could not have happened until the Christianization of culture had reached a kind of maturity, as it did in the thirteenth century.

Herder's natural progress

Now let us look once more at the forward-going expectancy of the eighteenth century, this time through the eyes of the German philosopher, Johann von Herder (1744-1803). He was deeply influenced by Rousseau, but he did not agree that the natural sentiments of man have been corrupted by institutions. Instead, he found that nature has been slowly unfolding its good inner potentialities ever since the beginning of history, and that this unfolding *is* the history of mankind. Here are the five propositions with which he closes his book, *Ideas to a Philosophy of History*:

I. The end of human nature is humanity, and that they may realize their end, God has put into the hands of men their own fate.

II. All the destructive powers in nature must not only yield in time to the preservative powers, but must ultimately be subservient to the perfection of the whole.

III. The human race is destined to proceed through various degrees of civilization in various revolutions, but its abiding welfare rests solely and essentially on reason and justice.

IV. From the very nature of the human mind, reason and justice must gain more footing among men in the course of time, and promote the extension of humanity.

V. A wise goodness disposes the fate of mankind, and therefore there is no nobler merit, no purer or more abiding happiness, than to co-operate in its designs.

Here is the optimism of the eighteenth century as it faced the future with the absolute certainty that the worst times were over. Something very much like Utopia is inevitable.

Hegel's dialectical progress

Hegel, one of the giants of the nineteenth century, gives a much profounder statement to the growing sense of purpose in time. Put simply, his philosophy of history sees *Geist*, Spirit, as the animating power behind events. The essence of Spirit is freedom; and the whole history of mankind, insomuch as it is intelligible, is a movement toward the expression of the proper kind of freedom in culture and politics. The absolute World-Spirit must embody itself in historical peoples and States, for this is the way the Spirit becomes self-conscious and fulfills itself. Spirit becomes self-conscious only in and through men—particularly great men who exercise leadership in history—and therefore in conjunction with the State.

The influence of Christianity is quite clear. Hegel's *Geist* is only a very rationalistic and secularized version of the God who is known in the Incarnation, who moves from within his transcendent deity downward, out of spontaneous love, to incorporate mankind into his own life and to transform man into likeness unto himself in order that the purpose of creation—fellowship of his creatures with himself—might be fulfilled. What Hegel seems to think is a direct insight of his own natural reason into the nature of history, is only a faint and perverted shadow of the Christian religion. But Hegel is partially aware of this, for he often says: "I really understand what Christianity is about better than the Christians do, and I'm going to put Christianity on a sound, rational, philosophical basis."

The Spirit's pilgrimage toward self-realization, says Hegel, began in the East and goes in a great dialectical movement westward, in three great ages. The first age was the Oriental Age. Hegel thought that the Orient was politically despotic. In terms of the essence of the Spirit, freedom, it was therefore a culture and a State where only one man was free. Hegel's second stage is the Greco-Roman, which he sometimes divides into

two parts. Here freedom exists not only in a ruler, but in many others as well. The third stage of human history comes with the Germanic peoples. Here a synthesis of the two previous forms of freedom comes into being, and everybody has freedom in his self-surrender to a State—the Germanic State.

The dialectical process by which Spirit moves through space and time is patterned after the dialogue by which Plato attempted to teach and arrive at truth. I state a proposition (thesis), and your reaction to it is to state another proposition in conflict with it (antithesis); we then seek in honest thought and conversation to see the truth in both propositions and to rise to a level in which both truths can be incorporated (synthesis). The result becomes the thesis of a new dialectical movement. Hegel's absolute Spirit can never embody itself completely in the finite. Therefore, in one period it will express part of itself (thesis), and when that has been realized to its highest degree, it will express another part of itself (antithesis) in new peoples and States. Then the Spirit will try to bring the two together in a synthesis, which will become in turn the thesis, and so on. (There is no reason why Hegel's dialectic should stop, except that in his judgment everything had been beautifully arrived at in the Germanic State—in principle, at least.)

And here is the "Christian" Hegel again, this time offering a secularized version of the prophetic understanding of God's Providence, of how God always raises up an enemy against any group, culture, or church which pretends to have all of God's truth.

Marx's dialectical revolution

Karl Marx took a great deal from Hegel, which he admitted, and a great deal from the Christian culture around him, which he did not admit. Marx, in fact, simply took Hegelian philosophy and turned it upside down. As he says in *Das Kapital:* "For Hegel the thought process is the [creator] of the real. In my view, on the other hand, the ideal is nothing other than the

material when it has been transposed and collected inside the human head."

Hegel had said that the Spirit creates the dynamic movement of history; Marx says that the converse is true: the dialectic is inherent in the material itself, and the ideas in your head are only the shadows cast by the dialectic of matter. Hegel might be called, then, a dialectical idealist if Marx is the dialectical materialist. But we are still within the framework of Cartesian thought, trapped by the idealist-materialist dilemma.

Now in order to see more clearly Marx's relation to Christianity, I will give you a brief version of his philosophy of history, showing its secularized equivalent for every aspect of the Christian world-view. God, of course, is the immanent dialectical principle within matter which works itself out through history, creating the animate level of existence and then the human. It finally comes to self-consciousness in the mind of Karl Marx, and through him expresses itself as a prophetic way of life, that other men may know the truth about history.

It begins in an equivalent of the Garden of Eden, where life had a sort of perfection under primitive communism. This was the time of innocence, when man was very close to the animals. There were no classes and no class strife; there was no enmity between men.

Then comes the Fall. Man discovers agriculture; he finds ore and begins to make rough tools; the crafts appear. This destroys the primordial harmony of the pre-technical primitive society, and classes begin to appear in the tribal life according to one's vocation; the basic fellowship of the community is ruptured, and strife comes.

In order to deal with this new society, one class creates the State, which is then used to subordinate the others. The institution of private property appears. In the view of St. Augustine, as we have seen, both the State and private property were divine institutions made necessary only because of human sin. They did not exist in nature; that is, in the good creation of God. But for Marx, who regarded the Fall both as a descent into sin

and also as a rise into self-consciousness from innocence, the Fall and the creation of State and private property form the beginning of a dialectical movement which moves inexorably toward a perfect consummation.

The class struggle which now follows is the Marxian equivalent of the prophetic Old Testament preparation for salvation. The struggle follows the familiar dialectical pattern: One ruling class makes its contribution to history and breeds within its society an exploited class which becomes angry and strong enough to revolt. Throughout these revolutionary cycles Marx assumes that the dialectic moves each time toward a better stage. The final period is announced by the great prophet of the preparatory times, Karl Marx. He is the one who for the first time discerns through empirical science the true nature of history and unveils it before mankind.

The prophet's last dialectical movement begins with capitalism as Thesis. This is, of course, nothing save Marx's analysis of his own time. The industrial revolution was just getting under way, and although Marx did not foresee all its fruits, he noticed that there was an inner contradiction in capitalism. Mass production systems depend on continual expansion, he reasoned. Yet, because industrial profits go to owners only, the system is ultimately unable to supply the people—the makers of the goods—with enough money to buy the industrial products.

Marx's Antithesis is the growing and angry proletariat, the makers of the goods. This is the exploited class that capitalism breeds, he says, for it is only inevitable that our production system continually drives toward an increasingly wealthy and small owner class and an increasingly poor and large working class. So the proletariat is the Chosen People, elected by the dialectic of history to become the revolutionary class. And when Marx shows them the true meaning of history, they respond to the prophetic summons and become a self-conscious, revolutionary proletariat, organizing for the last revolution of history. The revolution is the Marxian equivalent of the catastrophic coming of salvation, through the sufferings of Christ and his Church in history.

Because the proletariat is the exploited class it is able (for Marxian reasons not clearly revealed to me) to see what no other class ever saw before; namely, that a classless society is the goal of history. Thus the classless society which will emerge after the successful revolution will bring the dialectic to an end, for there will be no more conflict, man with man. This is the Marxian Consummation.

Now Marx, as a Jew, had the Jewish understanding of history that appears in the New Testament in the Book of Revelation. So he understands that there must be a millennium before the consummation. When the proletariat revolts it does so within the framework of a capitalist society, a bourgeois political democracy. It must destroy these institutions, but to do so it must seize the State as it is, in its bourgeois phase, and use it as it had been used under the capitalist regime. This period is known as the "dictatorship of the proletariat," or the "socialist stage" of history. Communism considers itself to be in that stage. The dictatorship is in the interests of all the people, whether they know it or not, and it has many urgent functions. It must first abolish all the old institutions and replace them with proletarian ones (Rousseau's idea); this is the "liquidation" of the capitalists, the socialization of property, the education of the great mass of people, and the indoctrination of everyone with the truth which is Marxism. It happens here or there, in one then another nation, in one segment of history and then another, but finally it conquers the world.

Eventually the dictatorship will abdicate, for a coercive State will no longer be necessary. The classless society will have been produced, and the "natural harmonies" of human nature will assert themselves; the State will "wither away." It is the end of the Millennium and the beginning of the final salvation. This is the real Communist stage of history.

Now, let me sum up the amazing parallels between the great Christian framework and Marxism. For God there is the dialectic of history which works itself out (Providence); for the good creation, the Garden of Eden, there is primitive communism; for the Fall there is the rise of classes in society; for the

preparation there is the dialectic of history until it comes to the capitalist stage; for the proclamation by all the prophets and the angels of the coming great salvation, there is the prophetic word of Marx, who by empirical science discerns the meaning of history. The prophet speaks to a chosen people. Christ could come only to the Jews, and Marx could come only to the proletarians whom he calls to their saving revolutionary action. The Party, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which finally gives way to the consummation, the new heaven and the new earth—these are the Marxian equivalents of the Church, the Millennium, and the Age-to-Come.

Marxism is surely a predestinarian religious movement, and therefore its stamina is much greater than was that of Nazism. But we do not really understand Marxism until we see that it is nothing in the world but an acutely intense effort to realize what our whole secular Western world has dreamed of. It is the opposite side of ourselves, and it says quite frankly that it is able to exist because we will not do what we dreamed of doing, and that it has its power over us because it *acts* to do what we only *hope* to do. It is eighteenth-century equalitarianism and nineteenth-century socialism on the quick march. So you see, Marxism is only a part—although a dynamic part—of this period of secularism in Western culture.

Just before he died, Marx's collaborator, Frederick Engels, wrote his *Dialectics of Nature*. J. M. Cameron, in *Scrutiny of Marxism,* quotes some rather unsettling words from the *Dialectics*:

"There is a curious passage in one of Engels' last writings which, if it is taken seriously, qualifies somewhat the optimistic and progressive implications of Historical Materialism as it is usually stated. In it he argues that matter goes through an 'eternal cycle,' in which from all eternity and to all eternity organic life and consciousness are being built up and destroyed. The only certainty we have is 'that matter remains eternally the same in all its transformations, that none of its attributes can ever be lost, and therefore, also, that with the same iron necessity [with which] it will exterminate on the earth its highest

creation, the thinking mind, it must somewhere else and at another time again produce it.'

"This pitiless notion was a commonplace in the ancient world before the coming of Christianity. It is odd to find it associated with what is often thought to be the most extravagantly optimistic of our political doctrines."

What does it mean? It means that there is not enough religious power in Marxism to overcome nature, that despair and meaninglessness will someday overtake and destroy Marxism as they are overtaking and destroying all of Western secularism. It does not have enough religious power to overcome nature's cycle of birth, growth, and death.

G. Salvation by Sociology or Psychoanalysis

Comte's social physics

Auguste Comte, the French philosopher who is generally credited with the invention of modern sociology, gives almost perfect expression to the self-confidence and arrogance of nineteenth-century man. Comte makes it crystal clear that religion is a dead issue, something that any intelligent person would not want to associate with. And he has his own three-age philosophy of history to prove it.

The first age, he said, was the theological (or mythological) age of history; it had three stages: fetishism, polytheism, and monotheism. The second age was the metaphysical or philosophical age, when man relied upon reason and his rational grasp of the world rather than upon religion. The third age dawned with men like Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, and was called the positivistic age, or the age of empirical science. In this final period the progress of man would culminate, and the future would simply be the practical working out of the implications of this final age and the acquiring of greater knowledge through science. So, we see that religion has been overcome first by philosophy and secondly—and most effectively—by empirical science; science, in other words, has proved that religion is no longer tenable.

Now Comte suffered under the illusion that the laws of human social behavior can be found by the experimental method with the same degree of accuracy as the laws of the physical behavior of inanimate matter. He reasoned that if man can understand the laws of his own social behavior, he can manipulate society as he has manipulated physical nature through the laws of physics. "Social physics," as he called it, is the key to Utopia.

The religion of humanity

The prophetic aspect of Comte's life comes in his last years, when, by reason of personal experience with a beautiful woman who was somewhat mystically inclined, and through maturing and suffering, it dawned on him that the important thing was not the science by which society was to be shaped, but the scientists who did the shaping. So he hastened to guarantee that there would be a group of intelligent people who knew what the proper goals of society are. To this end he started a new religion, the Religion of Humanity. Perfect humanity was the god of this religion. Allegiance toward the idea of a perfect society was created by cultic acts derived from Roman Catholic worship, and by credal statements which were humanitarian substitutes for the creeds of Christianity.

The literary expression of this nineteenth-century humanitarianism comes out neatly in "Abou Ben Adhem," the poem by Leigh Hunt. Abou Ben Adhem, you remember, awakes one night and sees an angel writing in a book. "What are you writing?" he asks. "I am writing a list of those who love the Lord." "Is my name on the list?" asks Abou Ben Adhem. "No," says the angel, "it isn't." "Then," says Ben Adhem, "write me down as one who loves his fellow men." The next night the angel comes and shows him a list of all those who were greatly blessed by God's love of them—"And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

Notice Hunt's presuppositions. Ben Adhem was not a religious man. He never went to church, and he didn't bother about God. Maybe God existed, maybe he didn't—at least you

could let God take care of himself. All of Ben Adhem's energies were directed toward loving man. And the poem says that he was right as against the religionists. God agrees with him; he loves Abou Ben Adhem much more than he loves the confessing, worshiping churchgoers; God is for the humanitarian cause as against religion itself. We saw this in Alexander Pope, too. Don't bother about God, for "the proper study of mankind is man."

St. Paul, writing in the sixth decade of the Christian era, has the answer to Comte, Hunt, and Pope: ". . . although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools . . . because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator . . ." (Romans 1:21-22, 25)

Paul is describing the same stage of decay and disintegration in Greco-Roman culture as that which we have reached in our discussion of the rise of secularism. We have come to the religion of mankind—Humanitarianism as the substitute for religion.

Scientific self-knowledge—Freud

It was inevitable that the anthropocentric point of view should lead man to expect as much of the commandment "know thyself" as of the commandment "know society." Since man himself, as Comte finally realized, must be the manipulator of society, he must learn about his own nature—through the experimental scientific method—so that he can understand and control himself. So the nineteenth century gives us the new science of psychology—and some of the old eighteenth-century optimism begins to disappear.

The great name of this movement's greatest achievement is, of course, Sigmund Freud, the founder of depth psychology—psychoanalysis. At one point he described his work as that which had delivered the third terrible blow to man's evaluation of himself. The first blow, said Freud, was the cosmological

blow struck by Copernicus which destroyed geocentricity and forced man to acknowledge that his earth was not the center of everything. Charles Darwin dealt the second great blow, for from Freud's standpoint, the great naturalist had proved that although man was very special indeed, he was only a special kind of animal. The final great blow, embodied in the conclusions to be drawn from psychoanalysis, forces man to understand himself as a very pathetic creature, the product of inner forces which render him quite helpless and which have taught him to deceive himself beyond the point of self-recovery —that is, without psychoanalytic help. We suffer, said Freud, from a universal neurosis which betrays us into living by illusions and lies; and one of the greatest of man's illusions is his religion.

What, then, is Freud's doctrine of man? A brief sketch of it would run something like this: On one side of our personality we are the Id, the "it." This is a compound of our animal heritage, a complex of instinctual drives and urges, the central one of which is the sexual drive, the libido. The Id is thus an impersonal, instinctive self seeking expression. On the other side of our personality we are Ego. This is the rational self.

This Ego with its Id is set in the context of society, which demands certain standards of behavior. These demands are transmitted to the individual largely through the family, and primarily through the authority of the father. So the poor Ego is caught between two contradictory forces: the vitalistic powers centered in sexual urgency which push from animal inheritance, and the moral demands of society which are focused through the father. The situation is intolerable, so the Ego abdicates, retreating into the unconscious and taking with it all the powers of the Id.

This is the fall of man into neurosis, and at the moment of the fall there is created the Superego, the substitute self. The real self unconsciously abdicates and "internalizes" the father in itself, becoming the Superego, the Censor. Let us look more closely at Freud's fall into neurosis. The first desire-object of the young boy's sexual drive is the mother. The father there-

fore becomes a hated rival as well as the executive representative of social morality. Still, the child loves the father, for he is a source of security and affection. Therefore the child feels a deep guilt both about his hatred of his father and his incestuous love for his mother.

Freud does not claim that the drives toward patricide and incest become explicit in the child's consciousness, but only that they create a powerful "guilt anxiety," being condemned by society and the father. The child becomes anxious about his security with his father and imagines that the father hates him. When the Ego abdicates under pressure, it internalizes the father in the self: the Superego is the father taken into the child's personality. The Superego thus overcomes the guilt anxiety by identifying the self with the father, by taking the father's side. All the incestuous and patricidal drives are pushed into the unconscious to the accompaniment of great guilt anxiety.

This is the famous "Oedipus complex," or, in its corresponding form for females, "Electra complex." Freud claims that this fall occurs in every person somewhere between the ages of three and five. All of us internalize our father, whom we imagine as hating us; therefore we hate ourselves (the Freudian "will to death"). The deep guilt anxieties connected with our whole sexual life arise out of the fact that its first attempt at self-expression was incestuous and therefore anti-social and anti-father. For Freud this is a clue to everything in human history.

In *Moses and Monotheism,* he attempts to explain the murder of Moses as he had earlier explained the murder of Christ in terms of the Oedipus complex. (The fact that Moses was murdered is an historical reconstruction of a German scholar, Ernst Sellin, chosen by Freud because, according to Freudian mythology, Moses should have been murdered.) *Totem and Taboo,* which Freud published in 1912, is his most significant work on religion, and in it the Oedipus complex, the fall, plays its full role.

Totemism, we should recall, is a primitive form of social organization in which each clan associates itself with a species of

animal—the clan, or totem, animal. Clan members regard themselves as the kin of the totem animal, which is sacred and is guarded by certain taboos, the chief of which is that it may be killed by members of the clan only for ritual purposes. Freud explained, to his own satisfaction, the rise of totemism by his own theory of man's fall.

Comparing the psychic lives of modern neurotics with the external behavior of totemistic savages, Freud reconstructed the earliest chapter of human history and gave us his own myth of the Fall—not the little fall of every man between the ages of three and five, but the great primordial Fall. The gist of the myth is that once upon a time human beings were in the "horde stage" (Darwin). The horde was ruled by a tyrannical patriarch who confiscated all the women for himself and forbade them to his sons. The young men rebelled, slew their father, ate him, and then in remorse denied themselves the women! Hence the ban on incest and the Oedipus complex.

The longing for the father, combined with the great guilt at having slain him, is not only the original Fall of mankind, it is also the beginning of all religion. The sons' hatred of their father is overcome in their remorse. Thus the father is ultimately exalted to godhood, although he is first projected into the sacred clan animal. "Thus," writes Freud, "arose the oldest and most important taboo prohibitions . . . the two basic laws of totemism: namely, not to kill the totem animal, and to avoid sexual intercourse with totem companions of the other sex."

The one exception to the taboo—the periodic killing of the totem animal and the eating of the animal as part of a sacrificial meal—allows the sons to identify themselves with their father and thereby expiate their guilt by sublimation. They obey the father's will by prohibiting clan incest and practicing exogamy.

For Freud, totemism marks the appearance of man himself in history, the beginning of religion, the beginning of ethics, and the beginning of drama. Civilization itself stems from the primal Fall which resolved the Oedipus complex the wrong way.

"The yearly sacrifice of a god seems to have been an important feature of Semitic religions [he writes in *Totem and Taboo*]. The ceremony of human sacrifice in various parts of the inhabited world makes it certain that these human beings ended their lives as representatives of the deity. This sacrificial custom can still be traced in later times in the substitution of an inanimate imitation [a doll, for instance] for the living person. The theanthropic [god-man] god sacrifice . . . throws the clearest light upon the meaning of the older forms of sacrifice. It acknowledges with unsurpassable candor that the object of the sacrificial action has always been the same, being identical with what is now revered as a god, namely, with the father. The question as to the relation of animal to human sacrifice can now be easily solved. The original animal sacrifice was already a substitute for a human sacrifice, for the solemn killing of the father, and when the father substitute regained its human form, the animal substitute could also be retransformed into a human sacrifice. . . .

"In the Christian myth man's original sin is undoubtedly an offence against God the Father, and if Christ redeems mankind from the weight of original sin by sacrificing his own life, he forces us to the conclusion that this sin was murder. According to the law of retaliation which is deeply rooted in human feeling, a murder can be atoned only by the sacrifice of another life; the self-sacrifice points to a blood guilt. And if this sacrifice of one's own life brings about a reconciliation with God, the father, then the crime which must be expiated can only have been the murder of the father.

"Thus, in the Christian doctrine mankind most unreservedly acknowledges the guilty deed of primordial times because it now has found the most complete expiation for this deed in the sacrificial death of the son. The reconciliation with the father is the more thorough because simultaneously with this sacrifice there follows the complete renunciation of woman, for whose sake mankind rebelled against the father. [I don't know what Freud means by 'the complete renunciation of woman' unless he mistakes as normative the radical asceticism of a certain type of Christianity which derived from the Greek influence.]

"But now also the psychological fatality of ambivalence demands its rights. In the same deed which offers the greatest

possible expiation to the father, the son also attains the goal of his wishes against the father. He becomes a god himself beside or rather in place of his father."

This is the Freudian explanation of the religion of the Son of God. By making the final expiation, Freud says, two things are done: the Son gets rid of his guilt and becomes the Father, which was the original desire. He has his cake and eats it too!

"The religion of the son succeeds the religion of the father [Freud continues]. As a sign of this substitution the old totem feast is revived again in the form of communion in which the band of brothers now eats the flesh and blood of the son and no longer that of the father, the sons thereby identifying themselves with him and becoming holy themselves. Thus through the ages we see the identity of the totem feast with the animal sacrifice, the theanthropic human sacrifice, and the Christian eucharist, and in all these solemn occasions we recognize the after-effects of that crime which so oppressed men but of which they must have been so proud. At bottom, however, the Christian communion is a new setting aside of the father, a repetition of the crime that must be expiated. We see how well justified is Frazer's dictum [in *The Golden Bough*] that 'the Christian communion has absorbed within itself a sacrament which is doubtless far older than Christianity.' "

Psychoanalysis is the only therapy for this neurotic condition into which all men have fallen, says Freud. Through a process of self-revelation, the self is led behind its original fall toward self-knowledge. The Ego is strengthened, rises from its abdication and takes control again. The Superego is dissolved, while the Libido is partially sublimated, partially tolerated, and partially satisfied. Man is restored to his pre-fallen condition with the wisdom, strength, and maturity to manage his own life; he becomes non-neurotic, or relatively non-neurotic. Thus, according to Freudianism, all three forms of anxiety are overcome. The anxiety with which one faces the outside world because one knows one cannot meet its moral demands is overcome through

recognition of the pretensions of the Superego, which represents these moral demands to oneself. The anxiety toward the Id, which proceeded out of the Ego's inability to control the Id, is overcome; and the anxiety of guilt is overcome because the accusing Superego is replaced.

Religion is an immature wish fulfillment which arises out of man's neurotic condition, says Freud. God, as the great Father, is simply the projection into a transcendent realm of the longing for security in our own father's affection which we desire against an unconscious sense of guilt born of our hatred of him. God is an illusion which has no future, since man is becoming mature enough through psychoanalysis to be delivered from his childhood needs and fancies. Maturity is best achieved by the self-understanding which Freud's true doctrine brings. The mature man par excellence is, therefore, Freud himself.

If we are to understand the sort of intellectual brinkmanship which modern man is practicing, we must realize that there is a psychology of psychology, a psychology of sociology, a sociology of psychology, and a sociology of sociology! Modern man is uncertain because everybody can explain everybody else in terms of his own true science. And the best criticism of Freud arose from within the psychoanalytic movement itself.

The first great apostate from Freudianism was Carl Gustave Jung; the second was Alfred Adler. Freud would never use the word "psychoanalysis" in connection with anything they did; he alone had psychoanalysis. Freud explains both these men in psychological terms. He charges that both of them left the Freudian faith because they were afraid to go through a thorough Freudian analysis.

Freud specifies Adler's apostasy in this way:

"Psychoanalysis [orthodox, Freudian] has a greater interest in showing that all ego strivings are mixed with libidinal components. Adler's theory emphasizes the counterpart to it; namely, that all libidinal feeling contains an admixture of egotism. This would have been a palpable gain if Adler had not made use of the assertion to deny, every time, the libidinal feel-

ings in favor of the impelling ego components. His theory thus does exactly what all patients do, and what our conscious thinking always does; it rationalizes, as Jones [a colleague of Freud] would say, in order to conceal the unconscious motives."

Do you see what Freud is doing? He says that Adler escapes from the rigors of the Freudian analysis by rationalization, and that the whole Adlerian system of psychology is simply a rationalized escape from the truth—Freudianism. "Adler is so consistent in this," Freud goes on, "that he considers the desire to dominate the woman, to be on top, as the mainspring of the sexual act. I do not know if he has upheld this monstrous idea in his writings."

Freud explains Jung and his Swiss colleagues in terms of cowardice: they are afraid to risk the social disapproval which the Freudian findings inevitably bring. But he is not done with them. "The previous theological history of so many of the Swiss workers," writes Freud, "is as important in their attitude to psychoanalysis as the socialistic record of Adler for the development of his 'psychology.'" Notice that Freud explains the apostasy of the Jungian school in terms of its sociological situation: Swiss theology has influenced them. Adler he explains in terms of his socialistic ethos.

Now, this raises the final problem to which I have been moving. If Freud can psychologize Jung and Adler, explaining their psychological schools of thought in terms of their psychological condition, cannot they, in turn, psychologize Freud and explain the Freudian school in terms of Sigmund Freud's psychological conditions? And if Freud can explain Jung in terms of his cultural environment (Swiss theology), and Adler in terms of a cultural and political outlook (Utopian socialism), why was he so furious when Janet, the French psychologist, tried to explain Freud in terms of the sociological and cultural situation in Vienna?

The hidden presuppositions—Kunkel

Our final problem in uncertainty, or the relativity of knowledge, lies in the philosophy of psychology, or the philosophy of

sociology. Let us turn to Fritz Kunkel, and hear what he has to say about the philosophy of psychology. Kunkel was an able psychoanalyst; his difference from Freud, Jung, Adler, and the rest is simply that he holds a Christian theological position. This from *In Search of Maturity:*

"In a science like physics every new discovery must augment the existing body of knowledge. It may force us to change the earlier theories to a certain extent, but it would never create a new kind of physics in addition to the one which exists. In psychology it is different. Adler's discovery could not be assimilated into the Freudian system. It had to become the basis of a new system of its own. And what Jung discovered could not be understood or even seen from Adler's or Freud's viewpoint. His psychology includes most of the facts which his forerunners described. But his philosophical approach is incompatible with theirs. This fact can be understood as an historical necessity if we admit that psychology is a 'philosophical science.' Its viewpoint depends on the scientist's conscious or unconscious philosophy. Therefore it must change with the changing phases of human culture. The one psychology for which we are searching will be the result of the teamwork of many psychologists who share the same viewpoint, But it will be opposed to the psychologies which arise from different viewpoints.

"In this way materialism has produced another kind of psychology than has idealism. Thinking in terms of cause and effect, and using the preservation of energy as an underlying concept, the materialists discovered 'l'homme machine.' Life was a mechanism. This discovery left no place for free decisions and responsibility, and therefore led to complete determinism and pessimism. There was neither good nor evil, since even a broken machine still obeyed the natural laws. Life was a blind interplay of forces, meaningless, valueless, and dull. The last and greatest exponent of this psychology was Sigmund Freud.

"The idealist is convincd beforehand that 'man is good.' The connection of means and goals explains human life to him. There would be no evil or suffering if man could only understand that all men are good. Evil is an error and can be overcome by better education. This psychology is essentially ration-

alistic and optimistic. Its last great exponent was Alfred Adler.

"At this point the objection is made that such a controversy can be resolved only by objective investigation and observation of facts, according to the rules of natural science. But this is not true, fortunately and unfortunately. If it were true, life would be much simpler and less dangerous, but on the other hand less colorful and exciting, and totally uncreative."

If Dr. Kunkel is correct (and he is, of course), then psychological data must be collected and interpreted in the light of a philosophical point of view which does not itself rise out of those data. If one does not interpret man from the standpoint of Christian theology, then one must interpret him from some other point of view—idealism, materialism, dualism, Buddhism, Judaism, or something else. There is no such thing as neutrality; neutrality is the illusion of modern man.

Those who do not realize they have a point of view cannot criticize it and therefore have no protection against it. Freud was unconsciously, and therefore uncritically, a materialist. He assumed that his materialistic mythology was derived from criticism, which belongs only to empirically demonstrated fact.

The biological man—Kinsey

So many scientists suffer from this form of myopia. In our own day Dr. Alfred Kinsey is a good example. One of his amazing presuppositions in *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* is that by studying some 12,000 mid-Western Americans you have a clue to the sexual behavior of all human beings.

More important, however, is a supposition that derives from the fact that Dr. Kinsey is a biologist—to the exclusion, apparently, of other important sources of knowledge. He shows no signs of having studied philosophy or the history of Western civilization. So I suppose it is quite unfair to ask him to have any historical understanding of what the word "nature" means when it appears in state or federal statutes, or even in the Declaration of Independence. Perhaps we should not expect a biologist to understand what the West meant when it founded

democracy on the concept of nature. When Dr. Kinsey finds that nature as referred to in our law does not conform with nature as the biologist sees it, it is not surprising, perhaps, that he should want to reform the law. But what he does not realize is that the category "nature" in Western civilization is a very rational and moral one, and until very recently no one dreamed that the meaning of the word could be arrived at through biology or sociology. To reform the positive laws of sociology using biological norms when "biology knows no morality" is to abandon morality.

This is all rather frightening, because the philosophical presupposition that man is a biological animal and that human laws should get right in line with biological nature is not a hairbreadth away from the philosophy of Adolf Hitler.

As St. Paul has shown us in Romans 1, there is an inner logic of self-destruction in man's turning away from God. For when he turns away from God he substitutes himself, putting himself on the throne of God and worshiping himself. Then, because man can no longer know himself truly—for you cannot be self-conscious except in the presence of another, and you cannot know your true self except in the presence of the true Other—man begins to lose all sense of his humanity. He begins to understand himself in terms of the vitalistic powers which he has in common with the animals; then, even the image of man is removed from the throne, and the birds and the beasts ascend to it. "Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles." From Comte and the Religion of Humanity to Freud and Kinsey and Hitler is only a short and logical step.

CHAPTER IV

Christianity for Moderns

A. Revelation Is the Issue

At the beginning of our historical survey we first tried to convey some sense of what medieval Christian man was like, what he believed in and how he looked at the world. Then we traced the steps by which modern man broke away from the Christian revelation and the Christian community. First he made God dependent upon man's reason. Then he supposed that Christian man was nothing more than "natural" man; he put his trust in himself and thereby lost all true conception of himself, for man cannot know himself truly except in the presence of God. Next he sought to understand himself in terms of his animal nature. Finally he fell victim to the demonic social forces which drive him against himself and against his fellow men. Now he peers with increasing gloom into the depths of the future.

In spite of the growth of secularism, at almost every stage of this logical descent into meaninglessness some men have awakened and returned to the Christian tradition. In our time we are witnessing a wholesale return by some of the most sophisticated and intelligent people. W. H. Auden, whose description of the modern sense of despair I quoted in the first chapter, is a recent convert to Christianity, T. S. Eliot was an earlier convert. The English philosopher C. E. M. Joad was a more recent one; before his conversion he was the philosophical mind behind H. G. Wells, who died in black despair when his Utopianism collapsed and he was no longer able to hold the doctrine of progress underlying his *Outline of History*. When

Joad became a Christian he wrote a very simple little statement about his conversion. While evil had looked him in the face all his life, said Joad, it was not until it slapped him in the face that he awakened. Once awakened to evil, Joad could understand Christianity and become a churchman.

These new Christians are as sophisticated as they were before. They have not sacrificed the gains of secular thought; they have not betrayed the integrity of the human mind; they have not forsaken the truths of modern empirical science; and most of them are as well trained in the history and disciplines of philosophy as anyone can be. Clearly, it is possible for the best minds of our generation to become profound and simple Christians—with no harm to themselves.

What is it, then, in Christianity which repels so many modern secular minds? I believe the trouble lies in the Christian doctrine of revelation. For the past twenty years I have felt this to be true, and almost every experience I have had of the modern mind confirms that conviction.

One fall not so long ago, on the streamliner going from New Orleans to New York, there were university professors, graduate students, and undergraduates going back to resume their university life. In the club car we had a continuing seminar on religion, and sooner or later almost everybody in the rear part of the train joined us. The sessions went on informally—one lasted six hours and ended at five o'clock in the morning. But whether it was the professor of English from the University of Maryland or the professor of English from the University of Virginia, or the graduate student in philosophy from Yale, or the business adminstration graduate student from Harvard—for everybody the stumbling block to acceptance of Christianity lay in the doctrine of revelation.

For the modern mind it is pure gobbledegook to say that God was uniquely and absolutely revealed in a particular tradition, among an obscure people, in an obscure corner of the world, and that the climax of this revelation came nearly two thousand years ago. This is an offense to the modern mind, which believes that even if there is some truth in religion, this truth

ought to come from the philosophy of religion. It should come after a survey of the whole scope of religion, taking a little out of Buddhism, a little out of Hinduism, and a little out of this and that. Truth, in short, ought to be derived from the history of religion. But the modern mind is blind to the fact that empirical study of the universe will never lead to the discovery of God, who he is, what he's like, or how to get in communion with him. It would be just as intelligent to look for a Ford car at the Chevrolet agency and to conclude that because you didn't find any Fords perhaps they were not being made this year, or that there hadn't ever been any Fords at all.

Let us turn, then, to revelation. I will try to describe the doctrine, briefly, and in a form acceptable to the modern mind —or, at least, in a form which makes it possible for the modern mind to believe that revelation can occur. Then, perhaps, this mind can believe that it *did* occur.

What it is not

First, let us dispose of some negative truths about revelation: (1) It is not the communication of propositions by dictation. In other words, it is not God sticking ideas into people's minds, or dictating Christian truth or any other kind of truth. It is not a kind of divine-human mental telepathy. (2) The Bible is not the revelation of God; it is the *record* of revelation to many men and women in a particular history. (3) It does not give you any knowledge that you might find out otherwise. It gives you no substitute for scientific knowledge, empirical investigation, intuitive insight, or philosophical discernment. It cannot come into conflict with what is true in those fields, because it in no way conceives itself to be on the same level with these types of knowledge. (Conversely, these other types of knowledge can give you nothing that revelation gives.) (4) Revelation does not give you information about past or future fact. It does not pretend to predict the exact shape and character of future events, nor does it claim to sustain the factuality of alleged events in the past. When it does that it tyrannizes over the human sciences and runs right out of bounds. (When a pope identified the astronomy of Aristotle with the revelation of God

and excommunicated Galileo for supporting Copernicus, the Church ran out of bounds. Whenever the Church has sought in the name of religion to maintain an antiquated science against a new, demonstrable hypothesis based on facts, it has always been defeated—and it always will be defeated.)

What it is

Now for a positive definition. Revelation is the self-disclosure of the living God; it is God making himself accessible to personal relationship, to personal communion.

We might try to understand some of the principles of revelation in terms of a personal analogy, for we are personal beings, and, in our likeness to God, we ourselves are clues to some of these principles. (I am not reasoning from the human to the divine; I am saying that the divine-human relationship is analogous to the human person-to-person relationship.)

Revelation and scientific knowledge

You and I, as personal beings, are subject to empirical observation on many levels. It doesn't make any difference whether I am bright or dumb, educated or barbarian, sane or insane; as a physical body I am subject to Newton's laws of motion. I can demonstrate this by jumping out of the window and showing that gravity treats me as it would a sack of sand. Here is a whole avenue of approach to me as a physical object, and a great body of data can be gathered about me on this level to show that in the realm of physics I would behave just as any other object would.

I am also observable on the level of the biological sciences. The good medical man will deal with me in this aspect (although that will not be the limit of his concern as a doctor). As you know if you've ever been through a clinic, there is an almost infinite body of information which may be gathered about you on the physiological level, by means of X-rays, blood counts, fluoroscopic examination, etc. Throughout this process you are being treated as a biological object, and sometimes you feel a bit like the chassis of a Ford on the assembly line. Here, then, on the biological level, is another body of data that can be

compiled about a person. It is very valuable information, and I am grateful beyond expression for this knowledge.

Now let's move up one step further in the hierarchy of knowledge to what Europeans would call the anthropological sciences. These include everything that has to do with the life of man as man—the humanities as well as the sciences of man, such as psychology and sociology. Here on the anthropological level we immediately encounter a break, a new kind of situation for the scientist, for the object of the investigation is now not only an object, but a self-revealing subject as well. And unless he takes the initiative and discloses his unique humanness, the psychologist, the sociologist, the historian, and every teacher of the humanities would soon be out of a job.

Perhaps I can make this clear with a simple layman's version of what happens between the psychoanalyst and his client. The client presents himself for initial interviews, describing symptoms which are very painful to him and which he has begun to recognize as neurotic. Finally the analysis begins; it moves into the stage where the client narrates his dreams and describes experienced relationships in the family and in the community, and so on. At every point in the process even a non-directive analyst encourages the client to talk. This is absolutely vital, of course, for the analyst is the artist and the scientist of the human psyche. There is no way to put this psyche under the fluoroscope or the X-ray machine; there is no way to observe it and gather data about it unless it can be coaxed into self-revelation.

This element is in all the sciences that deal with man. You would not have the study of English literature unless man had expressed himself in a literary way. There would be no art to study unless man had indulged in artistic expression. The same is true of history—for what is human history? It is something quite different from the story of animals, for man's conception of history and his purpose for history itself enters into history and makes history.

Take, for example, a political custom in the United States. The parties propose platforms, and the people vote. Then the majority party goes into power and begins to put its platform

into effect. This is a very ideal picture of the situation, to be sure, but it has enough truth in it to illustrate the fact that history is the story of man's conception of history, which in turn enters into it and changes it.

Not only history, but all the anthropological sciences reveal the double aspect of man: he is transcendent subject as well as object. I can try to know you by studying your society, your political order, and your historical period, and I can master the physical and biological data that may be gathered about you.

But I still do not know *you.* I am not in communion with you as a concrete, unique, personal being. There isn't anything I can ever do, with all of the sciences at my disposal and with all of the knowledge that could be accumulated in infinite time—there is nothing I can do to a personal being that will enable me to know him. Communion is possible only if that personal being is willing to take the initiative and reveal himself to me.

It has been the Christian tradition all through the years that man, using his own scientific methodologies and his own philosophical reason, can never find out God for himself, that God can be known only when and where he has revealed himself, that God reveals himself by word and act, and that where the word and act are congruous, there God stands revealed. If one is to know anything about God, who he is and what he does, one must listen to the tradition which speaks about God out of its own living encounter with him. Let us be clear, however, that the study of religious peoples and their traditions, records, and institutions can in no way be removed from the scrutiny of "scientific" method, and that the Bible, which records the classical period of revelation, is still a record and not revelation itself.

Revelation in all religions

Classical Christians have never claimed a monopoly on the self-disclosure of God. On the contrary, it is our contention that without prior revelation there could have been no Christian revelation at all. Christianity comes on the scene rather late in human history; in fact, the early Church fathers thought of Christians as the "third people." Revelation, they said, had

come in three stages—pagan, Jewish, Christian—each succeeding stage being made possible by the one before.

At the pagan stage the divine is often revealed and understood polytheistically. The problem is that the divine forces are in conflict, reflecting the disruptions, animosities, and strife in human existence. In effect, the experience of the divine has not been powerful enough to begin to unify life and overcome its divisions. (Many people today who confess a monotheistic religion live very polytheistic, fragmented lives. They may believe, for instance, in a pantheon in which the American God is superior to all the rest and that he either should stand in splendid isolation from the others or that he should take firm charge of them.)

Paganism can also be rationally monotheistic, as in Hinduism or Neoplatonism. Here the unity of the divine is achieved by emptying him of personal concretion. In order to be with him one must climb right out of one's body, away from all contact with material, personal, and social life.

Biblical revelation—Amos an illustration

The great revelation that came in Judaism unifies God, without turning him into an abstraction, and at the same time throws out all his old, pluralistic competition. There is only one God and he is unity, whereas all divisiveness exists because of its rebellion against him and its pretensions to deity. This is the profundity of the myths of Lucifer's and of Adam's fall: all sin ultimately lies in the pretension to be God, which produces anarchic warfare between false gods, each trying to destroy the other.

Now that God is one, I no longer go to Aphrodite, say, with my sex problems; or to Athena for the tensions arising out of my life in the city; and I do not go to Ares for help when I am at war. My God now is not only one, but he is also transcendent; he is a sovereign power, not organically entangled in his creation. But perhaps most important of all in the Jewish stage of revelation, God is absolute righteousness. This was the burden of the prophecy of Amos, when he warned of the doom coming to the Northern Kingdom, Israel.

Let us look for a moment at the revelation which Amos received and at how he reacted to it—what he had to say to his people in his obscure part of the world and at his far-away time in history (the eighth century B.C.). He can stand for all the prophets who warned of the destruction of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms—the pre-Exilic prophets.

Very often, as with the Arabian seers, the Old Testament prophets came upon the oracle of God in a visual object. One day Amos saw a bursting basket of fruit in the market place, and as he looked at it the encounter with God came. He went on to tell the people what it meant to him. "You are like a basket of summer fruit," he said; "it doesn't last long. You've been cut off from the vine, you're in decay, and the bitter end is near." (The Hebrew word for basket sounds like the word for end.) Amos' (and God's) case against Northern Israel was a very simple one: You have forgotten God and have stopped worshiping him; your society is disobeying the God of righteousness.

Amos' time had something of the Utopianism of our own nineteenth century. We regarded Western civilization as the latest chapter in human progress and thought that the future would simply be an expansion of capitalism and democracy—thereby suggesting that perfection, if history ever achieves it, will only be the perfecting of what *we* stand for. So, the people in the time of Amos said: "When God's kingdom comes in its fullness, that means that *we* shall be on the top of the world. The day of the Lord is *our* day."

"Not so," said Amos. "The day of the Lord is a day of darkness. The end has come upon my people; you are doomed. Why? Look at the law. Look at your common life. Look at the churches. They haven't really told the people who God is and what he requires. They have preached what people wanted to hear: that prosperity is just around the corner, that God is a nice, sweet, take-care-of-the-people kind of person and will see that things are good for you. After all, they say, do you not go to his temples and worship, do you not sing his praises, do you not make your sacrifices? Everything's going fine."

I was reminded of this self-centeredness one day recently

when I read in the morning paper that a local minister had proclaimed that God was depending upon President Eisenhower more than he had depended on any man in history! You see how easy it is to slip into the position of identifying God with our own particular systems and beliefs. This is the fundamental sin, idolatry. This is the sure way to doom and death, for it is the way that tries to dodge divine criticism. Even *The New Yorker* said that it preferred the old-fashioned way which made Eisenhower depend on God.

"Look at the ruling class in the capital city of Samaria," Amos went on. "They sleep in ivory beds; they go to symphonies, but they are not grieved for the affliction of Israel (Joseph)." The nation was afflicted internally as well as in its foreign relations. At home thousands of her people were living below minimum subsistence levels. At the same time, a complacent ruling class was asleep to the threat of the great eastern empire that was nibbling at its borders; the mood was fundamentally isolationist.

Amos went up to Bethel, the king's place of worship, and delivered his message again: "The end is come upon my people."

"Don't say things like this!" snapped the priest in charge. "This is the king's chapel. You cannot speak against the king in the king's chapel." Amos replied, of course: "This isn't the king's chapel. It's God's chapel, and the word of God judges all kings here."

Then the priest suggested that Amos go earn his living down in Judah, the Southern Kingdom, because they didn't want this kind of subversive activity going on in the north country.

Very few people believed the word of God when it was spoken by Amos. And few paid much attention when the burden of the message was taken up by others—Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah. But the doom did come, first to the Northern Kingdom about 721 B.C. Then, in 586 Jerusalem fell, and the cream of the Southern Kingdom was taken into exile in Babylon. The Promised Land, which had been the heart's desire of Abraham, the Canaan of the dreams of the people of the wilderness under Moses and Joshua, the land they had held for themselves

and had enjoyed and brought to a high degree of viticulture—this Promised Land, given to them by God, was razed.

Now there were some who had understood the prophets. The world-shaking, catastrophic experience of having one's homeland laid waste and of going into exile did not destroy them as a religious and cultural entity. They were the Remnant. They survived because man can stand anything except meaninglessness, and for those who had understood the prophets the catastrophes were the judgments of God upon human sin. They survived, for they believed in God the more, not the less. It is an axiom of Biblical scholarship that the Hebrew peoples went into the Exile pagans and came out Jews; during the crisis the prophetic religion of the minority replaced the majority culture-religion.

The Remnant survived and returned to Palestine. The Jews came into new being under the providential hand of God, who raised up Cyrus, who destroyed the empire which held them captive and who by a new imperial policy restored the peoples to their native lands.

Revelation in crisis and on the Cross

So the Biblical story goes on. Each time there is a great crisis, there is a great breakthrough in understanding of God and in the quality of the relationship of the people to their God. And at last there comes the crisis of all crises. The time being ripe, the people being ready, God came himself. He came not through a prophet, but as himself, in the person of his Son, who appeared in history as one who is wholly and completely human—a Jew named Jesus of Nazareth, who had a public ministry of one to three years somewhere between 28 and 32 A.D.

What does the Church mean by saying this is the "crisis of all crises?" Our age does not think enough in terms of crises, so I am going to turn for a moment to this subject and try to show how closely crisis and revelation are related. First let's take a cultural crisis in our own time. One is born, one grows up, and there are no major crises in life except personal ones.

Then, there may come in one's historical period a great world-shaking threat to, or even the destruction of, one's whole culture. In that crisis one will see and experience new things and break through to new levels of understanding even of the simple things one knew before.

In Fedor Stepun's *The Russian Soul and Revolution* there is a good example of the kind of revelation which comes in cultural crisis. Stepun speaks of the non-Communist Russian intellectuals in the period just after the success of the revolution. Nothing about their life was changed immediately. Stepun kept on lecturing at the University of Moscow; he lived in the same house with the same furniture, the same books, the same everything; and his family life went on. But he knew it was only for a little while.

"In the Bolshevik revolution still more radically than in war [he wrote], all customary forms of life were suddenly placed in question. The old familiar reality was, for all who could not actively work for Bolshevism, made unreal by the turn of a hand. It was as if a man were orphaned and made homeless overnight and did not know where to go. From this deepest need the first consolation arose—the great gift of distinguishing between the true life, anchored in God, and all outward seeming and false show.

"In the light of this new insight, all things became distinct and all values of life took on their original meaning. Physical work, neglected and tabooed by the educated, was again found to be the divinely willed foundation of all life. The abundant meals became again 'daily bread'; heating and lighting became the fire on the hearth; residence and home became lodging and shelter. In the spiritual realm also the genuine and the false were clearly and sharply distinguished. After a long time it was known again with great certainty what love and faithfulness, marriage and family, friendship and willing service, courage and principle are."

Now let's look at a personal crisis and see how it can disclose new facets of character. I will illustrate with a little story that was told by one of my great colleagues. He was studying at

Oxford before the First World War, and at tea time one day the assembled friends fell into an old routine in which each man tells about the most exciting thing that had ever happened to him. One chap, who came from English countryside life said somewhat shamefacedly, "I'm sorry, I have to pass. Nothing really exciting has ever happened to me." And he added a bit facetiously, "Missing breakfast occasionally is the greatest variation in life I have ever known."

After the war, my colleague returned to England and encountered one of the old group. They quite naturally began to discuss the others. The Englishman asked: "Do you remember the chap to whom nothing more exciting had ever happened than missing breakfast? Well, you should have seen him in the war. He was in my segment of the trenches; and there came a period of great stress and strain, when we had been in the trenches a long time in rotten weather and under heavy fire. We got orders to go over the top one morning at dawn, and when zero hour was almost upon us it became perfectly clear that everybody was in a blue funk and we were not going to make it. Then that chap climbed out of the trenches and sat up on the sandbags smoking a cigarette and watching his wristwatch. Just before the final signal, he ground his cigarette out in a sandbag, with bullets whizzing by, and he said: 'It's about time, boys; get ready; come on, let's go!" By what he had done he literally pulled them out of the trenches."

In the routine behavior of his countryside life there was no real revelation of the depths of courage and the possibilities of leadership within him. But in a crisis the depths were revealed, and men responded to them. Everybody who knew that man in his routine life knew him thereafter in the light of the depth which was revealed, once and for all, in a crisis.

We Christians maintain that God deliberately brought the God-man relationship to a crisis, where the depths are revealed; and that the God who is seen in routine behavior, describable by the physical laws of the universe, is seen in his depths in that revelation in crisis through Jesus of Nazareth, there, in Palestine in the first century. And we see the meaning of his routine behavior as that which was disclosed in the crisis. You cannot

look at the routine behavior of the universe and deduce the revelation of God in Christ crucified. But you can see the revelation of God in Christ crucified as the depth which lies behind the routine action of God in the creation and maintenance of the universe.

So, we Christians say that in a special tradition, in a special people, in a special place, and at a special time, God was encountered; and in this continuing tradition, with each new revelation coming on the basis of one before, God moved climactically toward the *perfect* revelation, the crisis of all crises, when the prophetic word and the mighty act were perfectly congruous—when the word became flesh, when God became man.

The Christian revelation can only follow the Jewish revelation, which unveiled the alienation of man from God. God was completely righteous and man sinful. In late Judaism awareness of the gulf was so strong that one did not speak directly of God or even of the kingdom of God, but of the "Most High" and of the "kingdom of heaven." This is the real disclosure of the real relationship; this is our real human situation; we are this far from God. Christianity does not destroy this, but only carries it to its full and logical end. It begins by admitting that you and I belong to a world in which Christ cannot live, for the world crucifies him. By definition, man is the Christ-killer.

The Jews, of course, did not crucify Christ as "the Jews"; they crucified Christ as men. They were the only people in all human history who were close enough to God to recognize him clearly enough to get sufficiently mad at him to kill him. Everybody else was so confused about who God is and where he is and what man's relationship to him is that they could never come to grips with him. The Jews were far enough along the way to know what the real issues were; therefore God could pose the real issue with them.

The Christian religion presupposes the Jewish sense of alienation—indeed, it drives the Jewish analysis all the way to the extreme of the Cross. That is the situation of man with God.

But that is not the good news, the gospel. The gospel is the proclamation that the God from whom we are all alienated, but whom we may not overthrow and with whom we have to come

to terms, has overcome our rebellion by a true manifestation of himself not only as righteousness but as absolute love, not only as the opponent of sin but as one who is willing to take the very consequences of our sin into his own being and transmute our sin, by an agony of his own suffering, into a life-changing impact upon us. The gospel is the proclamation that our response to this has brought us into a new relationship, a new covenant, a "new testament" with God. This is a new life lived in communion with God and expressing itself brokenly, to be sure, in the midst of all that works against it in this world.

Christianity is a story. And in telling the story of God's mighty acts and our response we use personal, dramatic, narrative language. God made the universe. God created man in his own image. Man rebelled against God. Then God prepared man in the long Old Testament, or Advent, period. Then God came himself in the person of his Son, united to a full, whole, and complete humanity, so that Jesus of Nazareth is the living, personal sacrament of the personal being of God. By a mighty act of love, his dying, which expresses and culminates his whole life and teaching, he evokes from man an answering love which knits man and God together in himself; and through that new relationship there flows the steady, personal influence of God—the Holy Spirit—transforming the individual and binding men into a new community, the communion of the Holy Spirit, which is the first installment of the consummation, the sure and certain victory that shall come because God may not be overthrown.

And all of this rests upon revelation and our response to revelation.

B. The Communication of Revelation

The strangeness of the Biblical World

Modern man, whose soul is filled with the scientific spirit, enters a strange and old world indeed when he opens his Bible. An angel announces to a young woman an unexpected impregnation by a divine father; a human being is born by "virgin birth" (what biologists would call parthenogenesis); "unclean

spirits," or "demons," fly around in the atmosphere between a flat earth and a seven-domed heaven, occupying and deranging people; Jesus is able to talk with these spirits, and at his command they go out of a human being and into some pigs. Illness of all kinds is healed, sometimes instantaneously; people are healed at a distance by men of God and especially by Christ. And the dead are raised up.

By contrast, the world that we live in might be described as an enormous machine which plows inexorably on according to its own internal laws, which, in turn, seem to have very little concern for you or me. It is a machine that doesn't do what we think it ought to do for our physical and psychological welfare, and there is much tragic conflict between machine and man. It is a world in which we suspect, with diminishing certainty, that there are biological and psychological laws as firm as the physical ones. And in some quarters we have suspected, at least until recently, that man is nothing more than a complicated biological machine fully open to scientific study and control.

Now how are we ever going to get those two worlds together? One possibility would be to focus the resources of modern research on the Bible. That is, using historical investigation with all its canons and operating criteria, we will delve into this Biblical record and find out once and for all what is fact and what is not fact. Unfortunately, the modern historian suffers a vital handicap. He is prone to think that he has fulfilled his function in relation to an alleged event when he has come to a conclusion that it is either photographable, empirically discernible fact or that it is not. But this is not the end of his job—not if he's a good historian.

A sophisticated Christian historian—Minear

There is a lovely little monograph by Paul S. Minear, a New Testament professor at Yale. It is called *The Interpreter and the Birth Narratives,* and in it he examines the stories of Jesus' birth in St. Matthew and St. Luke, where angels make announcements to shepherds, and shepherds make a pilgrimage to Bethlehem; where a star moves in obedience to the will of God and leads Magi from the East to the manger where Jesus

lies. Minear points out that the historian has done very little when he has determined within the realm of his science whether these events were probable (as photographable facts) or not. For if he be a good historian he is just as interested, or perhaps even more interested, in another kind of factuality—that is, what did these stories *mean* to the people among whom they were told and by whom they were appreciated? What did the stories say about their relationships to God and to man and to the universe and to human history?

Meaning is an important kind of fact, too. The psychoanalyst, to take a modern example, would be very deeply interested in the fact that on my way to his office I had seen a green devil walking into the lobby of one of our big hotels. The analyst would probably suspect that this was not a photographable fact, but it would be a psychological fact, and it would tell him a whole lot about me.

What Paul Minear wants us to be aware of is the fact that we are subject to the temptation of absolutizing our own historical and cultural climate, which we might humbly recognize as being full of limitations. Sometimes we become aware of such limitations when we confront a totally different culture—that of India, for instance. I don't think I have ever talked to a sincere Indian without being impressed by the crude materialism of our culture. This is not to say that *they* are the absolute standard, but it helps you to realize that *you* are not the absolute standard, either.

If, through humility and awareness of the relativity of all cultures we can escape to some degree from absolutizing our own, then we may begin to inquire what these Infancy stories meant to the people who told them and sang them. And we move from the search for photographable fact to the question of what is the life-situation *(Sitz im Leben)* of the people to whom the stories and the songs belonged.

Members of the early Church regarded themselves as being incorporated into the life of Jesus, understood and received as the Christ; they thought of themselves as being the mystical body of Christ here on earth. So it is easy to understand that in the Infancy stories people were singing and poetizing not

only about the birth of their Lord, but about their own existence in their own immediate historical, social, political situation. Why does the Church in the Epiphany season each year tell the story of Herod's enmity toward this little infant who was born in an obscure way in Bethlehem in a manger? Because this was the person, this Jesus, whom the world crucified; and those who belong to him, who are part of his mystical body here on earth, are also persecuted. In the Infancy narratives these Christians are hearing their Lord, now sitting at the right hand of God in majesty and glory, say what the Fourth Gospel puts on his lips as a historical statement: "Marvel not that the world hateth you, for the world hateth me."

One may elaborate this approach, as Minear does, by showing that they are speaking and singing not only of a life-situation but also of a faith situation *(Sitz im Glauben)*—the whole significance of Christ in relation to the world—and a worship situation *(Sitz im Loben)*. For these stories include canticles sung at the first-century equivalents of Morning and Evening Prayer and the Holy Communion Service. So they are all manifestations at one and the same time of life-, faith-, and worship-situations.

Now all these are facts. So you see it isn't very profound of me to think that I've done away with the historical problem because I've come to the conclusion, out of my own historical-cultural outlook, that there were not any angels flying around in a clear, sharp photographable way.

But there is still a question. Let us grant that as a modern I'm skeptical about the angels. I must still ask what the reality was in the experience of these people that is expressed by the figure of the angels. At this point, I think, one is inevitably brought to the fact that we always deal with things in symbols. Now from what point of view do you say that one set of symbols is so utterly superior to another set of symbols? Let's look at the ones the New Testament uses to describe what we would call mental disorder, or perhaps insanity.

In the whole anti-Godly side of God's creation there is a hierarchy which includes Satan and the fallen angelic powers—the demonic powers, principalities, thrones, dominions, and so

forth. In the atmosphere beneath the domed heaven there are the corporals and top sergeants and first-class privates and GI's in this army of Satan's; they are the unclean spirits, the little demons. They crawl into people, twist and corrupt their personalities, and injure and disease their bodies. These are the terms in which the first century described a reality which all of us know in the twentieth century.

If we turn to a modern description of a similar reality, we find a very different set of symbols. According to the Freudian school of psychology, for instance, man has an animal background and contains within himself a host of instinctual drives that seek self-expression. As we have already noted, these drives are designated by the Latin pronoun Id (it); the center of the person is labeled with another Latin pronoun, Ego (I). The ego undergoes enormous twisting and distortion, subject as it is to the demands of the Id from the inside and the demands of society from the outside. It cracks, goes into hiding, and leaves in charge another pronoun, Superego. The conflict involves, roughly speaking, love of mother and jealousy and hate of father, who focalizes the demands of society. The person falls into an Oedipus complex. And everyone so falls, says Freud, in one degree or another.

On top of all this, Freud projects this fall backward into history, saying that an original, primordial fall took place when men lived like animals in a herd (a Darwinian myth). So he creates his own mythology. Now this, for some reason, is regarded as being highly scientific, whereas if you speak of demon-possession today you are hopelessly out of date. My point is that we all have our symbolic way—and if we're dealing with personal relationships, our personal and narrative way—of portraying the human situation. We all have our mythologies, if you will.

Now the first thing I think we ought to say to our modern minds about Biblical angels is that we do justice neither to the Renaissance artist nor to the reality if we believe they were human-like beings with wings who flew around up in the sky. In the second place, we should remember that in the Biblical and Christian tradition angels are always creatures, not gods.

Somehow we in the modern period think that the ancient peoples and the pre-scientific Christians regarded angels as supernatural, as divine beings. Of course, this is not true. Angels are supra-individual, but only in the sense that a culture or a historical movement is supra-individual. We should look upon the Biblical idea of angels as the supra-human realities of nature and culture which form and shape our individual and our social situations through the dynamic movements of history.

For example, if a New Testament author had been describing the period from about 1932 to Pearl Harbor, he would have said something like this:

"There arose an angelic following out of the heart of Germany, a religious and cultural movement whose angelic power is Nazism. This is a fallen angelic power, and in the presence of God it is doomed; it will destroy itself. But it comes to men with lying and deceitful signs and wonders and with great promises, making the same angelic pretension that was made by Lucifer—the pretension of deity. Therefore it gathers unto itself followers and power. Like all fallen angels who pretend to be God, this power, (as St. Paul put it in II Thessalonians), 'exalts himself against everything that is called God.' It not only is defiant of the true God, but it tyrannizes over every other pretender, and so it is at warfare with the other angelic powers."

If the author had been speaking from the American perspective, he would probably continue more or less in this way:

"There is also a British angel which, seen in the presence of God, is a much more acceptable angel—a democratic angel. But this angel has some serious blind spots, too, because he has deluded himself into believing that war has always been a bad thing and that it is completely outmoded now. He is a pacifist and for a period is blind to the evil in the Nazi angel, believing that one can come to rational terms with an irrational and demonic power.

"And there is a Soviet angel, which is the fallen angelic power of mechanical and technological reason. It pits itself against all the other angels and has the special blindness of underestimating its foes, the democratic and capitalist and semi-socialist angels. Betrayed by its own blindness, the Soviet

angel prematurely abandons conversations aimed at an alliance with the Western angels because it underestimates their power and stamina and their ultimate willingness to fight the Nazi angel. And this Soviet angel therefore precipitates the war."

We cannot escape symbolism. Even in describing God we have to use such words as "Father" and "Being," and we have to use characteristics of the human personality in order to speak of his qualities. There is no way to escape describing any reality in symbolic terms, and all I am pleading for is that we avoid the arrogant assumption, because we are caught by the contemporary dogma that nothing is true unless it is photographable fact, that our particular set of little flat symbols is true.

Of course, this attitude can be taken too far. In our understanding of the importance of myth we must not lose sight of the fact that the Christian position depends upon photographable fact as well. To dramatize this point we have only to recall what happened in the nineteenth century, when some historians came to the conclusion that the whole New Testament portrait of Jesus was a myth—that there wasn't any photographable person named Jesus of Nazareth there at all. Dozens of books and thousands of articles came out with titles like this: "Jesus, Fact or Myth?" "Jesus, Fact or Fiction?" or "The Historical Jesus and the Christ of Faith." And the attempt to relate these two approaches or to abolish one in favor of the other was made in many different ways. The problem was not solved by saying that there must be somebody in history because revelation and our faith-response says so.

Revelation, as we have seen, gives you the *meaning* of empirically discernible fact, but it does not give you the photographable fact itself. Therefore, the decision was made in the depth of the Church's life to give allegiance to both things if possible. But if historical investigation showed that the story of Jesus was a great fictional myth, then we would have to give up being Christians in the historic sense of the word. Some people (like Hegel), you may remember, tried to say that Christianity was a set of eternal propositions which might in principle have been discovered by anybody. So if historical inves-

tigation deprived Jesus of photographable life, they agreed that we would not have to stop being Christians. Perhaps St. Paul discovered Christian truth. We could not, merely in the name of revelation, tell the science of historical investigation what it must find before it began its investigation.

The only way to deal with this problem, it was thought, was through more historical investigation. Scholars labored with perhaps reluctant and humble willingness to find out the truth, come whence it may and cost what it will. And with full allegiance to scientific discipline they were able to show with a high degree of probability that there was someone there in history. They risked their Christian faith against the faith that truth will not contradict itself. So far the risk has been vindicated. And out of the risking there came a purification, for it forever delivered you and me from the burden of maintaining that the photographable fact which is necessary to the divine revelation and to our response to it must be exactly identical with the New Testament account of it.

Let me illustrate this. Suppose someone asked me, "How do you know that your wife loves you?" I would begin to talk personally and dramatically, describing what she says and does in order to make manifest her revelation to me. I would say: "Look at all the things she does for me. Last Wednesday she cooked my breakfast, she got my children off to school, she cleaned the house, she brought me my mail, she got my lunch" —and so on, right through the day. And then I might relate some of the words that she said: "At an odd time of day she caught me long enough to make this direct statement—'I love you.'" So I would say to my questioner, "In and through these actions and words a loving personality was made manifest, and I responded to her. That's the reason I know she loves me."

Then my wife would speak up and say: "That's all very well, but remember—last Wednesday you were out of town!" And I would say: "Oh my goodness, that's right!" Then I would have to correct my dramatic, personal narrative.

"Well, it must have been Tuesday," I would say.

"No, it wasn't Tuesday. You were out of town all day Tuesday, too," she would recall.

"Well, what day was it?"

"I don't know. It was a usual day. But I don't know which day last week it was."

My narrative has a certain amount of factuality. It is datable fact, but the date is lost to historical investigation for ever and anon—and yet it happened. It might be that I put a Monday breakfast and a Wednesday lunch and a Friday supper all on the same day. But there *was* a breakfast, and there *was* a lunch, and there *was* a supper.

Insomuch as the Biblical record can be corrected by historical research, let's correct it. Insomuch as its pictures cannot be corrected because there are no data, or because no data have as yet appeared, let's be reverently agnostic about the exact historiographical accuracy of the narrative—and still understand that there *is* photographable fact there, although it may not be identical with what is alleged by the narrative. The major purpose of the narrative is the communication of the personal revelation, not the preservation of the visible, audible, tangible events through which the revelation came.

The only alternative to this position is to declare the Bible historically and scientifically correct, and then set it against the findings of empirical science. In my college generation this was attempted in a very dramatic way. A young instructor named J. T. Scopes had violated the law of Tennessee by teaching the theory of evolution, which holds that man is descended from the lower animals. In the famous trial William Jennings Bryan, acting as special state prosecutor, used the Book of Genesis as if it were historiographically accurate truth. Clarence Darrow, on behalf of Scopes, used the findings of biological and geological science to defend the new evolutionary views. This conflict has been ably dramatized in the play and movie, *Inherit the Wind.*

The impact of all this on my generation of young people was very direct and very damaging: It made atheists out of many of us. We in the Deep South, in Fundamentalist territory, were given no alternative to accepting a Christianity which demanded that we violate the integrity of our own minds by betraying the scientific laws and methods which we had begun

to learn in high school. It was a false dilemma, but we didn't know it. And it was only many years later that I, for one, discovered how false it was. From the standpoint of classical Christianity the Fundamentalist position is a new idolatry, "Bibliolatry," which makes the Bible an object of faith at least alongside God, if not instead of him. In summary, one must try to steer a course between these two hazards: the Scylla of misunderstanding Christianity as propositional truth that is independent of historical, photographable fact; and the Charybdis of saying that because Christianity depends upon photographable fact we must insist that the fact is identical with the alleged factuality of the record—or has been exactly reconstructed by a particular scholar.

Listening to the Bible

Let me illustrate this with a New Testament story from Mark 4:35. It is a little picture which, according to the science of New Testament criticism, is called a Miracle Story. Dozens of them were told in the Early Church:

On that day, when evening had come, [Jesus] said to them [his disciples] "Let us go across to the other side." [That is, across the Lake of Galilee.] And leaving the crowd, they took him with them, just as he was, in the boat. And other boats were with him. And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?"

Suppose we ask, "Did it happen? Did Jesus really speak to the wind and the seas, and did they really stop?" Or suppose we say, "Oh, we can explain this!" (This is the Lloyd Douglas approach.) "Everybody knows that the Lake of Galilee is nestled down in hill country, and as a result the wind behaves

very peculiarly here. It's very usual for little squalls to arise, whip the water into a frenzy, then suddenly stop." So you can say: "I'm a Fundamentalist; Jesus spoke and the storm stopped." Or you can say: "I can rationalize the 'miracles' away in terms of purely naturalistic, physical phenomena." But whichever way you go you haven't come anywhere near understanding this story as the early Church understood it.

Now here is how the early Church used this story and, indeed, all miracle stories. For the purposes of illustration let's say that I am a traveling missionary, perhaps even St. Peter himself. The year is about 60 A.D., when Nero was at his most oppressive, and I have come from the episcopal city of Jerusalem to Rome to see how the congregation there is getting along. The members of this little Christian community ask me to preach one night; so I get up and tell the story as it appears in Mark. Now my purpose in telling the story is not remotely to prove that a number of laws of nature (about which the early Church did not even know) were broken by an irruption of divine power in a man named Jesus, and it is least of all my purpose to show how the miracle may be accounted for by purely naturalistic principles. The congregation in Rome wouldn't have been interested in either of these approaches.

I would have told the story in this spirit: Jesus of Nazareth, who had a public ministry in Palestine and who gathered unto himself a discipleship of which I was the prince, kept insisting by indirection and parable, by word and act, upon something mysterious about himself and his whole relationship to the history of Judaism, to the universe, and to God. This oftentimes set us in struggle with him. Just outside of Caesarea Philippi, I, Peter, rebuked him about his conception of Messiahship and in turn got an awful rebuke myself. The issue between us was that he had said the Jewish Messiah would be crucified; I said the Jewish Messiah does not die. And you know, we never did see that he was right about who he was and what his relationship to God and the universe was, until God acted upon us through the final acts of Jesus' ministry, namely, his crucifixion and resurrection. We were blind to his true identity all during his historic ministry—and so was everybody else. And now mark

my words: when he crossed the lake and stilled the storm in the midst of his disciples, what did we poor fools say? "Who is this, that even the wind and the waves obey him?"

And what would the congregation's response be to this? "Why, that's the Lord of Creation, sitting in majesty at the right hand of God—and he wasn't recognized in his earthly ministry!"

Let me emphasize that the miracle story was not told in order to prove anything about natural law or non-natural law. It was told to hold up before the eyes of the Christians in the Church the portrait of their Lord in action. It was told to elicit and intensify and renew their Christian faith in Jesus as the risen Lord.

Here is one more illustration which perhaps will show a little more clearly how we sometimes distort the Bible with our modern point of view. I shall paraphrase this story, shorten it, and modernize it somewhat. It is in the fifth chapter of St. Mark's Gospel.

At one time in his ministry Jesus crossed the Lake of Galilee to a place where some gentiles called Gerasenes lived. There he met a demoniac, an insane man, who was prone to run amok. He had been chained many times, but his demoniacal strength had burst his chains, and he was made more terrible by the fragments that hung and rattled on his wrists and ankles. He lived alone in graveyards. He was given to seizures, and he cried night and day with demoniacal noises. He used to beat himself with stones.

When he saw Jesus he ran and did obeisance to him, immediately recognizing what no normal human being could yet see about Jesus. And he cried out: "Jesus, Son of the Most High God, I adjure you by God, do not torment me." For Jesus had said, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" That is the word of exorcism that casts the demon out. Notice now, as the first Epistle of St. Peter says, that the devils believe and tremble. They recognize their master, and they immediately know that their doom is sealed.

And Jesus asked the unclean spirit, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," came the reply, which meant, in other words, "I'm a multiple personality, I'm not a simple schizo-

phrenic!" And the demons, speaking with the voice of one man, begged Jesus not to send them out of the country. "We unclean spirits are very provincial creatures," said the man, "and we don't like to leave our neighborhood." Then facing almost certain doom, they have an inspiration—maybe there is a compromise, a way out. Spying a herd of pigs nearby, they say: "We know that you will not let us have human personality, but if you will let us solve our housing problem by moving into the pigs, then we will have two things that are next best to living in a person. We will have a body, and we will be able to stay in the neighborhood, to maintain our provincialism. Moreover [they are very subtle here—they don't say this, but it's implicit] you're a Jew, and Jews don't think much of pork anyway. So you won't worry about the pigs!"

And Jesus said, "All right, go ahead." So they move into the pigs. But this is a very traumatic experience for the animals. They stampede, and the momentum of the stampede carries them tumbling over the bluff into the sea.

What is the point of the story? It is that nothing more terrible can happen to an evil will than for God to let it have its way. That *is* the judgment of God—to give evil its will. He gave the spirits their will within the framework of Christ's sovereignty over the universe, and it destroyed them. While it is true that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God in judgment, it is a much more terrible thing to fall out of his hands. To let us have our own will *is* the divine punishment.

What has this got to do with literal belief in demons, or the Jewish attitude toward pigs? So often with our pedestrian, literal approach, which never gets beyond the problem of historical exactitude, we miss what the Bible is saying to us. We miss it both as the original meaning of the story, and as an occasion for a revelation which addresses us in our human situation today, calls us into faith, and admonishes us about judgment.

C. The Dilemma of Moral Man

On the humanist level no one today has articulated the human predicament better than Arthur Koestler. In a way, Koest-

ler's experience has been typical of all modern intellectuals, for I think no modern can really call himself modern until he has at least felt the temptation to be a Freudian and a Marxian. *Darkness at Noon* is Koestler's post-Marxist book, expressing the disillusion which made him leave the Communist party. *Arrival and Departure* is his post-Freudian book, exposing the bankruptcy which comes from putting one's ultimate faith in psychoanalysis.

In *Arrival and Departure,* which is enough for our purpose at the moment, Koestler's central figure, Peter, has a series of dreams portraying modern types of men. In the dream Peter is carried through an underground scenic railway which finally stops at a great underground cathedral. Peter finds that a trial is taking place there, and as each defendant comes before the judge, the faces of all those present—judge, defense and prosecuting attorneys, audience—assume a likeness to the defendant's face. The prosecuting attorney is the accusing conscience, and the defense attorney is the attempt at self-justification. Here is a sample of the first dream:

Meanwhile, the trial of the first defendant had begun. He stood facing the Court, a lean ascetic man with a stoop.

"How do you do?" asked the Judge in a terrible voice, which echoed through the dome.

"Humbly, my Lord," said the defendant. But his voice was thin, it collapsed in the air without resounding and fell with broken wings on the marble slabs before his feet.

"Bad echo," roared the Judge. "However, proceed."

"He has sacrificed his fortune to help the poor," said the Counsel for the Defence. His face resembled the defendant's, but there was more fat on his body and more righteousness in his voice.

"On what did you dine tonight?" roared the Judge.

"On a glass of milk and a crust of bread, my Lord," said the defendant.

The Prosecutor rose. He too resembled the defendant, but he looked even more haggard and his voice was like a lash.

"A child starved in China while he guzzled his milk and bread," he shouted.

"Condemned!" roared the Judge; and the audience echoed in awe-stricken voices:

"Condemned, condemned."

The defendant walked slowly out of the cathedral and sat down in his old seat in the train, burying his face in his hands.

Here Koestler is showing us the "Good Man," illustrating the negative side of justification by faith. You can never be justified by good works; for you always eat in a world where people are starving to death, and therefore you are always making the decision that it is better for you to maintain your life than for the other life to be saved. At the root of our being we have a moral sense, which the Church calls the natural law, which tells us, among other things, that we ought to love our neighbor as ourselves, that Christianity is right in saying that the self-sacrifice of the Cross is somehow the ultimate moral standard. In the face of his own conception of goodness, then, no man can claim that he is good enough to live. You cannot live by justifying your life by the works of the Law; you cannot give any moral justification, ultimately, for your life. It is an unmerited gift.

Koestler then presents a second man, the "Escapist," who represents social irresponsibility, and nearly all forms of Oriental mysticism.

The next defendant was a very old man, walking on a gnarled stick, and as he advanced, silence fell upon the cathedral. He stood, with his head bent, oblivious of his surroundings, as if listening to some sound which he alone could hear; but presently the silence became so deep that the others heard it too. It was a strange, thin sound, which rose and died at intervals, as if somebody were testing the keys of an old clavichord.

"What's he doing?" asked the Judge.

"He is tuning his heart," said the Defender.

"But he's got no tuning fork," objected the Judge.

"He is trying to adjust it to the celestial key," explained the Defender. "When he succeeds, his self will expand and become dissolved in the universal spirit."

The Prosecutor rose. He was even older than the defendant,

his bloodless lips were curved by bitterness and disappointment.

"I accuse this man," he said wearily, "of complicity in every murder and crime of present, past, and future."

"He never killed a fly," said the Defender.

"The flies he did not kill brought pestilence to a whole province," said the Prosecutor.

"Look at him and listen," whispered the Defender.

The old man had suddenly lifted his head, and his face was luminous with the smile of the blind. Judge and audience strained their ears, but the vibration of the chord had become so high-pitched that they could no longer decide whether they really heard something or were fooled by the ringing in their ears.

"Condemned because of the presence of doubt," said the Judge; the audience echoed, and the defendant, his smile extinguished and his head drooping again, hobbled slowly back to his seat in the train.

The accusation is correct. If one does not use one's powers in the struggle for justice, one has complicity in every single crime of present, past, and future.

The third of Koestler's men could be called the "Reformer." This type of man takes power in order to achieve justice; the Marxist is the extreme example of the type.

The next defendant advanced, and again the opposing Counsel were transformed to his likeness. He was a man of bold and reckless appearance, and as soon as he faced the Court, the Prosecutor rose:

"I accuse this man," he said in a mild, angelical voice, "of murder, arson, and treachery."

"We confess proudly to all our sins," the Defender shouted. "We did it in the service of our cause."

"He never listened to our voice except when asleep," complained the Prosecutor. [In *Darkness at Noon*, a Communist has bad dreams, because his conscience haunts him when his self-conscious control is relaxed in sleep.]

"He always obeyed ours when lucid and awake," boasted the Defender.

"He sowed evil everywhere on his way," complained the Prosecutor, beating his chest.

"So that good may be reaped in good time," cried the Defender.

"Have you seen the harvest?" roared the Judge.

"Not yet," said the accused man. "But . . ."

"Condemned because of the lack of evidence," roared the Judge; the audience echoed and the defendant, with a defiant smile, walked . . . back to the train.

In other words, I do evil that good may come, and am condemned because the good does not come.

Here is the whole moral dilemma of mankind. If I wield power responsibly, according to a moral law, I am involved in the whole structure of the evil in this world, the most elemental of which is the maintenance of my own life at cost of the extermination of some other life. On the other hand, if I seek to disengage myself from participation in this life because of the inevitable participation in evil which social responsibility brings, then I become irresponsible and a participant in *all* the evil because I did not try to stop it. Finally, if I seek the good by revolutionary action, I assume a heavy burden of evil, not only because I use bad means for good ends, but because the good ends rarely are achieved, and then only partially.

Now this very modern dilemma can be given even more pointed explication if we turn to Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6, and 7). This version of the "Sermon" was never preached as one sermon by the historical Jesus on the side of a mountain. As it stands now, of course, it is an editorial product of the gospel's author. The thesis is "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill [that is, to make clear the full demands of the Jewish moral law]." Let us look at Jesus' interpretation of some specific Old Testament precepts.

Thou Shalt Not Kill. Jesus points out that you have not obeyed this law when you have merely refrained from the overt act of killing somebody for an egotistical reason, such as greed, jealousy, or fear. Jesus shows that the inner and absolute spirit of the law which prohibits murder also prohibits every move-

ment of the human spirit which pushes the other down and exalts oneself. For murder is only the final, logical product of the desire to annihilate the other so that one may have a universe without him. Therefore the commandment condemns every movement of the human heart in self-exaltation to the detriment of one's neighbor—social snobbery, intellectual snobbery, the gossip which always tends to make the other person look less noble and oneself more so. Then Jesus says a very hard thing: to look or act with contempt toward one's fellow man, to call him "moron," or to be angry with him for a selfish reason, is in God's eyes as serious as murder is in man's eyes.

Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery. The Scribes, says Jesus, have intepreted the Old Testament so as to make you believe that you have obeyed the commandment against adultery if you have not committed the overt act of adultery. But, says Jesus, "I say unto you that the true meaning of the divine law is that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." As in the commandment about murder, Jesus passes from the external act to the inward movement of the heart. Emil Brunner, the Swiss theologian, says this makes adulterers of us all. (I always like to quote somebody else when I mention this, and the farther away he is, the better!)

An Eye for an Eye. I paraphrase: "You have heard that it was said to them of old time, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'; but I say unto you, Turn the other cheek." (Literally, "Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.") This is a very absolutist law as it stands, and a terrible lot of nonsense has been used to explain it. The thing to remember is that the law was made against the background of unlimited retaliation.

The situation in early Israel was much like that in the feuding days of the American mountaineers: If a Jones killed a Smith, then the Smiths would kill two Joneses, and so on; vengeance was cumulative. Then society stepped in and ruled that vengeance was to be limited to equal vengeance: only one eye for an eye; only one tooth for a tooth; and one Jones for a Smith. Later on the State (society) takes over the responsibility for

punishment, and there is a concerted attempt (at the instigation of the Christian religion) to make punishment primarily redemptive.

Jesus' point is that as the law steps in to limit retaliation to equal retaliation, it is demonstrated that vengeance itself is wrong. Now this is a very tough law which asks for a purity of heart utterly without vindictiveness, and it is an impossibility for all of us. But it is nonsense to interpret it as an external law laid down by Jesus which says that you must never use physical force under *any* circumstances. That misses the whole point. Jesus' interpretation does not even justify Gandhi's non-violent resistance as an absolute law for all human circumstances.

Thou Shalt Not Forswear Thyself. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" in the Ten Commandments is a prohibition of perjury, not "cussing." There were two kinds of oaths: one bound a man to tell the truth when he was testifying at the trial of a fellow Israelite (as our courts require "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth"); the other was an invocation of God used to seal a contract. Now Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount, "Again you have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not swear falsely ['Thou shalt not forswear thyself,' according to the older translation], but perform to the Lord what you have sworn.'" In other words, the scribes tell you that you are under peculiar obligation to tell the truth when you have sworn an oath, "but I say to you, Do not swear at all. Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No.'" You are no more obligated morally when you take an oath than when you don't, because under God you are morally obligated absolutely, oath or no oath.

Why do people require oaths? All men tend to lie and to break contracts where self-interest is at stake because Satan is already present—because evil is already there. The requirement of an oath, then, testifies to the sinfulness of mankind. "Whatsoever is more than a simple 'Yes' or 'No' is of the Evil One." The scribal interpretation equalizing retaliation and requiring the keeping of oaths cannot lessen the absolute prohibition of revenge, lying, and breaking contract. Such a weakening of obligation is entirely man-made.

To use a modern analogy, one would argue in vain that it was perfectly all right to break the speed law on the highway provided you are willing to pay the legal fine. Jesus is simply pointing out that this attitude toward law is a violation of its deepest and most inward spirit.

Thou Shalt Love Thy Neighbour. "You have heard from the scribes that it was said by God to them of old time, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.' " Actually, nowhere in the Old Testament is there a divine command to hate one's enemy; it is the scribal interpretation which says that you can limit the meaning of the word "neighbor" so as to exclude your enemy. Thus you can go along hating him in perfect conscience.

This is quite wrong, said Jesus. In the divine meaning of the law, "neighbor" means every man with whom you have, or might have, any relationship; it is every man. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor" means, therefore, "Thou shalt love thine enemy."

Then Jesus discloses the ultimate foundation of this law and of all the others. And this is the most important thing in the Sermon on the Mount. Why should I love my neighbor? Why should I love him even if he is my foe? Why should I be faithful in marriage? Why should I not perjure myself? Why should I not exalt myself and depress the other fellow?

Jesus says quite simply that there is one ultimate reason for all this. But first I want to dispense with some of the reasons Jesus did *not* give but which you hear all too often from modern pulpits. We are told that the individual has an inherent, absolute worth. Now that is a very interesting philosophical proposition; I tend to think it is probably true, but I don't know any way to establish it. However, I do know that Jesus did not teach the inherent, absolute value of the individual, and I know that Christianity is not grounded on it. Neither does Jesus say anywhere that the primary reason for loving one's neighbor is that if you will love him long enough and hard enough, something called the "attrition of love" will wear down enmity and eventually convert him to your position—be it political, moral, or religious. Nor does he teach that despite outward appearances, the neighbor that one must love has an inward goodness,

something that any good Christian will be able to see, or at least believe.

My point here is not that these reasons are untrue or partly so. I am saying that they are not the reasons Jesus gives for loving one another. His teaching is much simpler and clearer: "I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."

In other words, the question is not how benevolent you are going to be to the other fellow for his benefit; the question is, what is *your* status before almighty God—are you saved or damned? You are not commanded to love your neighbor primarily because of anything that is true about him, but because God loves him, "for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." God says, "Love me, love my other children; whether they are lovable or not from your standpoint is quite irrelevant."

Thus we see that the Christian ethic is rooted in the nature of God. The absolute worth of the individual is not based on something inherent in man; it is invested in him by reason of God's love. To talk about keeping the Christian ethic without the Christian religion is nonsense, for when you have taken love of neighbor out of its divine context it is no longer the Christian ethic.

You will recall that one of the sub-texts of the Sermon on the Mount is, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Now if Jesus' interpretation of the law about love of others seems to put moral action hopelessly out of man's reach, his discussion of pride and love of self is even more devastating. As the stern sermon goes on to deal with the righteousness of the Pharisees, Jesus brings more and more bad news about mankind.

"Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven." This is the thesis of Jesus' treatment of each of the three Pharisaic virtues. There is no religious or

moral act, says Jesus, that may not be performed out of self-love and the desire for human approbation. "Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward." They get what they want, but neither morality nor religion enters in. It's like a slot machine—they put their nickel in and they get their gum out. "But when you [the good Jew and the good Christian] give alms," Jesus continues, "do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

Sometimes Jesus' simplicity is breathtakingly profound. I might keep silent about my good deeds, understanding how wicked it is to do them simply for social approval; but I would still give myself my own approval. Therefore he splits me in two, my right hand against my left: "Don't let your one hand know what the other hand does."

If anybody seriously doubts the Christian doctrine of original sin, I recommend that he try a simple little experiment which I've tried on myself. Some month make a really heroic sacrifice of money—something that cuts the budget way down and makes you give up something you really want. Give it to the Church, or to the Red Cross—but give it away somehow. Then see how long you can go without telling somebody about what a wonderful sacrifice you have made! If you know the Sermon on the Mount pretty well, and if you understand that this kind of self-exaltation is sin, you'll never tell anyone directly, but watch yourself figure out almost unconsciously all kinds of ways to let the news leak out. And if you should succeed in not boasting overtly or covertly, then watch the movement of your heart. See how much self-gratulation there is not only in the good act itself but in the fact that you didn't tell anybody about it. The left hand congratulates the right hand on its generosity and you are self-righteous.

"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward." When you pray in order to be

known as a pious man, then your god is social approval and you have made an idolatrous transaction. "But when *you* pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." Now, this must not be understood too literally; it doesn't mean that you should always pray in some secret corner. If you took it that way you would be violating another word: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Jesus, like Koestler, slaps you one way and then back the other way; he makes you realize the human dilemma both in the depths of the heart and in the openness of social action.

"And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." Fasting is an act of self-discipline in obedience to a religious rule. It may be done for the right reason, but it may also be done for self-exalting reasons.

Of all sins, Jesus maintains that the sin of self-righteousness is the greatest. It is (he said in the Parable of the Mote and the Beam) like a great piece of wood—say an eight by eight—sticking in the eye of a man who is trying to get a little fleck of dust out of his neighbor's eye.

Nobody in modern times has dramatized this final form of egotism better than T. S. Eliot in his play, *Murder in the Cathedral.* It is about Thomas à Becket, who was Chancellor of England and a favorite of Henry II. The King made Thomas Archbishop of Canterbury in 1162, thinking that he could bring the Church under his control. But Thomas, much to Henry's surprise, took the job seriously. He resigned his chancellorship and precipitated a Church-State struggle that shook England and ended in Thomas' martrydom.

In the play St. Thomas is first tempted to stop the war between Church and State, to let everything be. He rejects this. Then he is tempted to take back his old job as chancellor, with-

out giving up his episcopal function; he rejects this. He is tempted by the barons to swing the power of the Church behind them in their struggle with the monarchy; he rejects this. He refuses to swing the Church to the baronage, or to the monarchy. He will not bring the Church down to a level of mere political force. But when he has rejected all these temptations he knows that he has cut himself off from all supports in this world and that he will inevitably be a martyr. Then and only then can come the most awful temptation of all:

> . . . think, Thomas, think of glory after death.
> When the king is dead, there's another king,
> And one more king is another reign.
> King is forgotten, when another shall come:
> Saint and Martyr rule from the tomb.
> Think, Thomas, think of enemies dismayed,
> Creeping in penance, frightened of a shade;
> Think of pilgrims, standing in line
> Before the glittering jewelled shrine
> From generation to generation,
> Bending the knee in supplication.
> Think of the miracles, by God's grace,
> And think of your enemies in another place.
> . . . . . .
>
> What can compare with glory of Saints
> Dwelling forever in presence of God?
> What earthly glory, of king or emperor,
> What earthly pride, that is poverty
> Compared with richness of heavenly grandeur?
> Seek the way of martyrdom, make yourself the lowest
> On earth, to be high in heaven.
> And see far off below you, where the gulf is fixed,
> Your persecutors, in timeless torment,
> Parched passion beyond expiation.

And St. Thomas cries out:

> Is there no way, in my soul's sickness,
> Does not lead to damnation in pride?

I well know that these temptations
Mean present vanity and future torment.
Can sinful pride be driven out
Only by more sinful? Can I neither act nor suffer
Without perdition?[1]

"Can sinful pride be driven out only by more sinful (pride)?" This is the final human question. The answer shows us that obedience to the Law cannot give us true goodness, for it leads only to a higher level of achievement and therefore to a greater temptation to pride. And pride *(superbia)* is what St. Augustine and all the Middle Ages called the essential and fundamental sin, original sin. In our scientific age we call it "radical egocentricity," but it is the same thing; it is like man's shadow. Confronted by the Law and its full demand for right deeds done in the right spirit, man always finds that in the very act of obedience he has not escaped his essential malady, egotism. Instead, he has accentuated it. "The last temptation," says Eliot's St. Thomas, "is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

In the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark, Jesus was asked by a rich man, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said, "Go and sell all your capital goods and give the money to the poor—give alms. Join my itinerant preaching band; come, follow me." And the young man went away, sorrowful, for he had great goods. And Jesus said to his disciples, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (People have tried for many years to get him into the kingdom of God by making the "eye of a needle" a gate in the Jerusalem wall through which a camel can crawl after the main gate is closed. This is a fiction of modern Jerusalem guides.) Then the disciples said, "But we have always thought that prosperity was a sign of the divine favor. If you say that one who has this sign of divine favor has a hard time getting into the kingdom of heaven, who *can* get in?" And Jesus said, "Nobody.

[1] From *Murder in the Cathedral* by T. S. Eliot, copyright, 1935, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., and used with their permission.

With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible."

The Sermon on the Mount, therefore, is not Christianity, it is not the good news. It is the Old Testament Law, and it "shuts up all under sin." The Law, the Sermon on the Mount, Christ as judge and example—if they were all—are bad news; they are condemnation, not salvation. Insomuch as the Old Testament is only Law, it exposes man to his moral dilemma, the lack of goodness in his heart and in his world. But the Old Testament is not only the Law, it is also the Promise that God has made to save man. The logic of the whole of the Old Testament is to diagnose the situation of man in such a way that he may become ready for the act of divine redemption which comes when the Messianic hope is fulfilled. Christianity is simply accepting Jesus of Nazareth, the man, as the long-awaited Christ, as the divine redemption which makes possible the salvation which man could not get for himself under the Law.

In the seventh chapter of his letter to the Romans St. Paul sums up the human problem: "With my mind I give assent to the law of God. I know that I ought to love my neighbor as myself; in the deepest depth of my nature I know that I ought to love God with all my rational and vital powers. But I cannot do it."

The real question before me and all of us is not "How can we save ourselves?" but, as St. Paul asked, "Who shall deliver me?"

D. The Divine Answer—The Good News

In the eighth chapter of his letter to the Christians in Rome, St. Paul answers his cry of despair:

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law [Jewish and natural law], weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

This, he says, is what God has done to justify me in my hopeless inability to love God and my neighbor. These four verses illustrate the central consciousness of the Christian Church through all the centuries. It exists as word, whose intellectual structure is Creed, and as action, whose form is liturgy. This consciousness is centered for most Christian denominations in what is called the Lord's Supper—the Eucharist, the Mass, the Holy Communion service. For whenever one touches the life of the church, one finds the message put simultaneously into words and in action.

The Spirit in the community

The first and most important assertion of the Church is that God has communicated his Spirit to us in and through Christ, something he did in no other way. A new Spirit, a new community of the Holy Spirit—the Church itself—is created by what God does to mankind in and through Christ. Perhaps I can clarify the nature of this communication, this action of God, by means of an analogy to human family life. All of us who are parents know that we never appreciate our own parents properly until we ourselves have become parents. However much children may love and appreciate their parents, they cannot see them in the full dimension of parental self-giving, they cannot understand all the details and minutiae of parenthood or even the gross amount of parent-energy that goes into the mere tending of a child.

Thus, the Church maintains that no single word or act of Christ—nor, indeed, the total words and the total acting of Christ—is ever properly understood except in the light of the final result, when God communicates his Spirit from heaven by the impact of Christ upon mankind, focused in his death and resurrection. Only in the light of this experience can you understand the earthly life and the teachings of Christ. Only then can you look back and understand the religious background of Christ, which is the prophetic religion of the Old Testament and the pagan religious history which underlies it. All this comes into focus only in the light of the later experience, the communication of God's Spirit through Christ. When Jesus does this, he

is seen not only as a human creature, but as one who sits at the right hand of God, as one who belongs more to deity than to humanity. The Spirit is received, pictorially speaking, from Christ at the right hand of God, not from Christ as he walks the roads of Galilee.

One can see how the Unitarian position completely misses the point. It fails to understand that the Spirit could never have been communicated by a merely human Jesus, even though he were a great moral example, a great teacher—and a great man of God. It becomes equally clear that abstract argument about the deity of Jesus is quite pointless. This is not an abstract doctrine at all. What Christians say is that we in the Church are those who have encountered this man as so mediating the Spirit of God to us that we cannot give an accurate description of him without saying that he came from the realm of the divine to us, and not from our human realm to God. He is not a pioneer, leading men upward to God; he encountered us head-on from the divine side. The point of impact which makes it most apparent that Jesus belongs to the divine side of the gulf between God and man is the Cross.

Every human element, good and bad, in the totality of world society is involved in the crucifixion in principle. It is a terrible mistake to understand Jesus as having been crucified by some especially bad people in the first century. Jesus was crucified by the highest reach of human religiosity, morality, and political justice. It is the goodness and religiousness of man which is involved in the crucifixion rather than simple, crude wickedness.

Every unbeliever first encounters the Church as the community of the Holy Spirit. Even if we are, so to speak, "born Christians" by natural birth in a Christian family and by the Sacrament of Baptism when we were infants, still our first encounter is with the Church. If at one time or another we came back to the Church after being non-Christians through intellectual or other difficulties, it was always some contemporary, living Christian who touched us. It was a member of the community of the Holy Spirit, of the Body of Christ which is his Church, who reached us. Always our contact is first with the

Church. And as we are drawn into this fellowship, we see that always, in its liturgical life and the intellectual structure of its doctrine, it points upward to God through Christ and backward to the revelation of God in his final self-disclosure in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ and in the coming of the

The Biblical story in creed and worship

The Nicene Creed is an intellectual expression of the message:

"I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible:

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man: And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried: And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures: And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father: And he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

"And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets: And I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church: I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins: And I look for the Resurrection of the dead: And the Life of the World to Come."

Also, in dramatic form, the basic story of the mighty acts of God is told in the liturgy of the Church Year. First comes the Advent season, the Old Testament time, the period of preparation; for until one feels the need, one cannot receive the answer. Christmas time tells of the coming of God as man and his birth as a human being. At Epiphany this life of God Incarnate makes itself manifest to the world, particularly to the Gentiles,

for it was their world which accepted Jesus. In the Lenten season the struggle with the world ensues, requiring a discipline which is reflected in the life of the Church as a likeness to Jesus' self-discipline. Next comes the final, critical posing of the issue between God and man when the sin of the world slays the incarnate life of God. This is Good Friday (not "bad" Friday, for it is the time of our redemption). Then comes Easter and Ascensiontide, God's vindication in raising up Christ to his own right hand. Finally, there is Whitsuntide, when the communication of God's Spirit in and through Christ creates the Church, as God created the world "in the beginning."

Everywhere you touch the life of the Church you find this basic story, the Good News of the mighty acts of God.

The communication of the Spirit by Christ: Incarnation and Atonement

In saying that the communication of God's Spirit was the primary work of Christ, the Church, as we have seen, means to emphasize the fact that the man Jesus of Nazareth is not properly understood merely through his teaching and acting, and therefore cannot communicate with or capture any human being with his essential Spirt until he is seen for whom he truly is. Just as a modern parent in the throes of parental life might look back on his own childhood, reflecting on the depths of love and self-giving that went into the molding of himself, so the Church, having received the Spirit, looks back and reflectively describes how this took place.

The first affirmation is that, out of sheer love for mankind, God descended from the level of his own majestic deity and became the man Jesus in order to engage the life of man. God came to live on the human level, engaging humanity where it really lives, in its human experience, and in its human language (which happened to be Aramaic). He became man, but he did not cease to be God. God the Father, if you will, lives in heaven, and God the Son came and lived as man. And yet the Incarnate Son never interrupted his close communion with his Father. So the Son lived two lives at once: one in heaven with his

Father, and one here with us. This, of course, is a very simple statement of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation.

Now as soon as this doctrine was stated and believed, people began trying to describe it in Greek philosophical language. Some fell into descriptions of Christ which the Church was forced to call heresies. It is very important to get the feel of these great heresies, for unless we do, we shall not recognize them when people address them to us in the name of Christianity—as they often do. I know many people who shun the Church because their conception of Christianity is based on one of the great heresies.

For the modern mind perhaps the most important thing to know is that from the very beginning, the Church has defended with all its power the whole, complete, thorough, unmutilated humanity of Jesus. Whenever anybody has tried to make him a superman, possessing structurally and in essence something that ordinary nature does not have, the Church has always said No. Whenever there was an attempt to say that Jesus' mind was divine, not human, the Church said No. If there was an attempt to supplant his human will with a divine will, the Church said No.

On the other hand, whenever anybody tried to make Christ less than the full and whole God himself, the Church said No. When people claimed that the Son who took into Himself our human nature is a mighty, angelic power, a sub-God, a creature from the divine order not fully and wholly God, the Church said No again. For the center of its Gospel is both that God *truly came* (as true man) and that it was *truly* God who came and no other.

This is the way Christianity was able to overthrow every kind of polytheism. Think for a moment of what would have happened if we had believed, say, that the Son was the mightiest of all angelic creatures, but not truly God. You would no longer have *direct* access to God; you could reach him only through a mediator who is not God himself. Therefore other revelations of God would come alongside of Christ to supplement him, perhaps even on an equal basis. You would fall into

the worship of angels, and somewhere behind this polytheistic array would sit the dark, brooding, unknown God himself.

On the other hand, to say that Jesus was simply God assuming a human body and appearing to be man is to say that God did not truly come, that he did not engage our life, that he wrought nothing among us. Again, we would have been deprived of the direct access to God by which he has in fact communicated his Spirit to us.

Therefore, the Church has always fought on both fronts of heresy, maintaining that Christ's human nature is so inseparably bound to the divine nature—the two natures so perfectly conjoined—that the life of God is lived out in its fullness on the human plane. Only if this is true do we have real communication with God, only then do we have real access to God, and only then does God communicate his Spirit and his life to us directly.

The direct communication of the Spirit of God is achieved by Atonement, literally, the At-one-ment. The New Testament says this in many ways; one of them is that at the death of Christ the veil in the Temple was rent asunder. The veil separated the great nave from the inner holy of holies in Judaistic worship, and once a year the high priest, as the representative of the people, went into the holy of holies after rigorous ceremonial purification. The Christian assertion is that this veil between God and man is rent once and for all, making direct encounter with God possible for all men.

It is through this new relationship with God, a new open way between heaven and earth, that the divine Spirit flows. From the divine side Christ blasts an opening in the human consciousness so that the divine can enter the life of man and begin to re-shape and re-form it. Thus, a new creation and a new creature appear in history by this mighty act of God in Christ.

The new creation is the Church; that new creature is the Church of which each Christian is a part, so that each member himself is a new creature. The imparting of the Spirit is the culmination of the work of Christ; the creation of the Church is the achievement of the coming of Christ. This is what St.

Paul means when he says that the relationship between God and man is no longer that in which man sees God as the judge and condemner of unworthy man—"there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."

Now, says St. Paul, we have a new principle of our being, the Spirit, "for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free" from the old principles of egotism and sin which alienated me from God. In reflecting upon how this was done, the Church says that God's radical humility in becoming man was focused in the crucifixion, which was the lowest point in God's descent toward man. Rightly understood, the doctrine of the Atonement is simply the nadir point of the doctrine of the Incarnation. (Christian doctrine would never say that the Incarnation terminates. God takes manhood into unity with Himself and this unity continues in Christ forever and ever; Christ's death and resurrection transfigure, but do not destroy, his humanity.)

What God did there on Golgotha, the Church has always said, was to take in humility the death which the sin of man imposed upon him, and make it the active sacramental expression of his love. "Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." (St. John). Even as he died, in agony and bloody sweat, he prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The crisis of all crises, this collision of God and man, made it possible for the first time for man to love God with all his being, and to love his neighbor.

The whole Gospel can be put very simply, as it was by St. John: "We love him, because he first loved us" in Christ and him crucified; God loved us into a loving response. This is not a sentimental kind of love. This is that irrevocable commitment of self to God; that sustained loyalty, fidelity, faithfulness by which one always puts God and his will first; that discipline of one's life in conformity with the divine purpose because one shares that purpose; that steady encounter with God which can come only in congregational worship and in the life of personal prayer. The parent cannot win the love of the child by saying, "Thou shalt love me," and the wooer cannot win the lady of his

choice by demanding, "Thou shalt love me;" but both can elicit a response from the objects of their love by an initial and continual acting of their own love upon them. So God loves us into a response. He does it through Christ, concretely, specifically, in history. "We love him, because he first loved us."

Reflecting further on how it received the Spirit of God, and thereby came into being, the Church has said that Christ is our sacrifice, made for us once and for all time. To understand this let us begin with a section of Anglican liturgy in which it is said that the worshiping congregation presents itself to God in Christ as "a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice." The word "reasonable" comes from St. Paul (Romans 12) and means "human," for in the ancient world the distinction between man and animal was the distinction between the rational and the a-rational creature. Christ has destroyed the cultic act of animal sacrifice, and the Anglican liturgy accordingly refers to a human sacrifice that is "holy and living," not an animal sacrifice that is holy and dead.

The modern rationalist fails to understand the implications of this. He looks down his nose at the pagan and the Jew for indulging in such a superstitious practice as animal sacrifice, but what he probably does not know is that the Jews sacrificed animals because they knew that human beings were not good enough to sacrifice themselves to God. Why are human beings not good enough? Because they have misused their freedom. Betrayed by their rationality, they have arrogantly turned away from their Creator, worshiped false gods, and made themselves into gods.

The Jew maintained that a good offering to God must get beneath the level of freedom—i.e., rationality—in order to be perfect. The animal offering was sinless, and its perfection was physiological, approved by priestly inspection. Pre-Christian man came to God, then, by identifying himself with the perfect sacrificial animal, and he had to do it again and again because he was not truly represented by his offering. The animal sacrifice is not rational (free) but a-rational and involuntary.

In saying that Christ is our perfect sacrifice, the Church

means that in him is full, whole, and complete rationality without sin. The sacrifice is perfect because it is human and absolutely voluntary. Christ is the high priest who offers, and he is the offering. Identifying ourselves with this sacrifice—and this is what we mean by faith in Christ—we come to the holy of holies, to the divine presence in and through Christ. He is our high priest and our Paschal Lamb; he is our sacrifice in whom we have the courage to come before the throne of God and offer ourselves as the great corporate body of those who are in Christ.

Religious sacrifice is always something given to God. The "sacrificial theory" of Christ's Atonement must never be confused with what has generally been called the "ransom theory" of the Atonement. A ransom is, of course, a price paid to bring someone out of a bad situation into a good one. Christ is our ransom. "Ye are bought with a price," says St. Paul, meaning that the price goes to the nature of evil in which man stood. We were not wrested out of the toils of this world, nor was our mind wrested from its love of self into love of God, without a great self-expenditure of the divine life. It was a costly process, and the price was paid by God himself.

One can see hints of this in ordinary human experience. Take the lot of the teacher, for instance. It would be sheer joy to be a teacher if one's offering of what knowledge and wisdom one has were gladly and eagerly received by every student on his own level. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Everybody knows that the unteachable person is the one who already "knows it all," who, in other words, does not know that he is ignorant. And it is very costly to break through this self-exaltation and create some humility in the student so that he actually *desires* knowledge. It is an agonizing thing to see our best offerings rejected, our deepest self-communications fired out the window or memorized and sent back on the examination paper, and forgotten. There is, to be sure, some egotistical suffering here, but the great part of the cost comes from the sin in the teacher-student relationship itself.

So we say that it cost God tremendously to break through man's hard crust of complacency and self-exaltation, and to re-

store the relationship with himself that had been broken by sinful man. The ransom price was paid to the sin in man as well as to the whole structure of evil in his world. God could communicate himself to man only by paying the price, and it was paid, finally, on the Cross.

This creation, this world of God, because it is at enmity with him, is always wounding the life of its creator. But with an incredible and inexhaustible love God maintains the world even as it drives nails into his life where that life enters the world. God supports his creation, but the hands with which he supports it are indeed bloody hands.

We become so acclimated to the sinfulness of the world that we forget how bad it really is. I was forcibly struck by this when the Dupont Theater opened in Washington, D. C., a few years ago. I live just across the river, in Virginia, where in those days the iron framework of society in regard to race relations wounded and divided the body of humanity. Making my first visit to the new theater, I sat in the lounge to drink coffee and wait for the feature picture to go on. Suddenly, I realized that I was in a place where there was no segregation, where men could meet to enjoy beauty and recreation, to drink coffee, as human beings under God. I will never forget the response of my spirit to being lifted out of this iron framework of segregation. But conversely, I realized how acclimated to segregation an anti-segregationist can become by being daily in it.

It is only under the steady pressure of God, whose Spirit comes to us through the Christ who is crucified by this kind of evil, that we do not become so domesticated in the sin of this world that we no longer even call it sin. Sometimes we even call it goodness; people die to maintain it, because it is their conception of righteousness. Only when they are confronted by the life of God, crucified by this evil, can they really see it for the costly sin it is. So we say that this is the ransom price necessary to wrest man from slavery to the demonic powers—the creatures of God who pretend to be God and are so accepted by men. Among them is the nation when it is thought to be absolutely just, and the culture when it is deified. It is

necessary to break man's allegiance to these powers (as the "good powers," the godly powers, the eternal powers), and to set man's life in the life of God so that he rises above nationality and race and economic and political order, and can look at these things from God's side and under God's criticism.

Speaking of still another facet of the Atonement, the Church has also said that in Christ is our deliverance from the wrath of God. Now, a great deal of nonsense has been talked in recent years about the New Testament being the book of divine love and the Old Testament being the book of divine wrath. It is nonsense, because there is a lot about the love and mercy of God in the Old Testament, and there is a lot about the wrath of God in the New. Indeed, "deliverance from the wrath to come" is a phrase in St. Paul's letter to the Thessalonians.

The phrase "wrath of God," wherever it appears in the Bible, does not mean the arbitrary and egocentric anger of God. God is not like a self-centered, oversize man who gets his feelings hurt and explodes capriciously. Properly speaking, the wrath of God is the righteous indignation of God, the steady, unremitting opposition to evil. If you think the matter through, you will find that you would not be interested in any God other than one who is the firm opponent of sin. The price that must be paid, of course, is the realization that God is the opponent of sin in oneself, and that's a terrible price to pay. But if God is not the enemy of sin, he then becomes only a kind of bourgeois Daddy who corrupts his creatures with indulgence and who therefore does not really love, for love will be content with nothing but the highest for the beloved. Therefore, says the New Testament, by revealing himself in his inner depths as being love, God in no way ceases to be righteous indignation against sin.

Let me illustrate this with a parallel from our contemporary experience. With the beginning of World War II the American people finally woke up to the evil of Nazism. Eventually we became its powerful and inflexible foe, determined to wipe it from the face of the earth. A good many Christians made the political decision early in the 1930's to be this kind of opponent

of Nazism. But we tried to make a clear distinction between being enemies of Nazism and being enemies of the German people. The German people, however, persisted in identifying themselves with Nazism, so when the war came we could not bomb the Nazis without bombing the German people. For us there was no way out of this dilemma. God does have a way out.

God came into the sphere upon which his wrath falls so that he might separate man from his sin and unite sinful man to himself in love; God came beneath his wrath without ceasing to be wrathful. It is as if we had sent a missionary paratrooper among the German people seeking to separate them from Nazism even as our bombs rained down upon them.

To respond to Christ, to love God in response to this great love, is always a rather painful thing for human beings. It is to receive a continuous Baptism with the Holy Spirit, to undergo a circumcision of the heart, to submit to a surgical action by which we are both drawn toward God and separated from our allegiance to the false gods: We die to sin, the world, the flesh and the devil, and we become increasingly alive to God. This means that much in our lives has to die. It means that we are submitting ourselves to a kind of spiritual surgery by which we are remade as the old and diseased is carved out. There is therefore always a purgatorial aspect of the Christian life.

Why do we submit to it? Because the predominant note, even in our growing pain, is joy. We always live at one and the same time in paradise and purgatory. Some churches do not make separate compartments of these two, even after death. But they are two aspects of the Christian life always, until the final Consummation. In our pain and joy we are simply entering into our Baptism, which is our death with Christ to the world and our new aliveness to God.

These, then, are the reflections of the Church in the Spirit about how redemption was wrought, how the Spirit was communicated, and how the Church came to be itself. God became man in humility. He did for us what the Law could not do: he elicited love for himself and therefore love for every man as

one for whom Christ died. We could not give this love of our own will-power, but in our response to God's love we find ourselves loving in increasingly deeper ways as we become new creatures.

Christ is our perfect sacrifice in and through whom we can become courageous enough to offer ourselves to God and to become participants in his life, which remakes us continually and steadily. Christ is the ransom price which buys us, at great cost to himself, from under the principle of sin within ourselves and from the captivity to the evil structures of our world; Christ crucified is the ransom price which ensconces us in his own life. Christ is the one who baptizes us with the Holy Spirit and rescues us from the righteous indignation of God which falls upon all sin—the sin within us and the sin in our world.

E. Being a Christian

How does one share in the Good News? How does a person become a Christian?

He does so first through an encounter with Christians, who are members of the organic body of Christ which is the Church. This encounter may come in many different ways, according to our personal backgrounds and careers, and according to our own particular "pockets" in Western culture. For some of us the encounter may have begun through nurture by committed Christian parents; we may have grown up under the care of concerned godparents in a community of Christians. As we matured, it may have been that a Christian answer was found to each human problem as soon as it arose.

William Temple, the late Archbishop of Canterbury, has always seemed to me a man fortunate enough to have had that kind of life. He came from a family of Christian intellectuals, and I think it quite probable that at no time in his long life did there ever appear a personal, intellectual, or moral difficulty which was not met in the context of a brilliant and profound Christian community. If there is such a thing as a "once-born

man," I think William Temple would be the representative figure in our generation.

But a good many of the rest of us were not fortunate enough to be surrounded by that kind of intelligent, relevant, sympathetic, and nurturing Christian life. At one time or another we departed from the Church. It may have been through no will of our own, but because of inability to believe. Perhaps this was a result of our own misunderstanding, or of the malformation or deformation of the Christian witness which was presented to us—though not necessarily through the fault of those who presented it. Whatever the reason, our pilgrimage back to Christianity began when someone spoke relevantly to us about his own Christian faith and his own Christian participation in the community's worship and life. It began with some concrete, living member of the Holy Catholic Church.

Our life in trust: absolute faith

It is within the life of the Church—as an association of human beings living in fellowship with God through Christ by the Spirit—that we have our absolute faith. This faith includes faith in the Church but not as a merely sociological and human institution; God the Spirit is always the judgment upon the Church and the transformation of the Church.

I believe in the Church because I believe in God; I believe in the Church because it led me to God. But I can never believe in the Church as though it were alongside God. God in Christ *is* always the Lord of the Church; the Church *is* always the outward and visible sign of the Spirit, but the human institution always belies the Spirit. To put it another way, we might say that every Christian as a member of the Church, and the Church as a corporate body of people, have, like our Lord, two natures, divine and human. But unlike our Lord's our two natures as members of the Church are not perfectly united. This is acknowledged in every classical form of Christian worship, whether it be written down in the liturgy or not.

The worship of the Anglican Communion, because of its clarity, shows forth this principle in the great celebration of the

thanksgiving feast, the Eucharist. It is also in the daily worship, Morning and Evening Prayer. Whenever our folk meet their God, there is always a confession of sin—not only our sin as individuals, but our sin as a historical Church. And we not only confess our sin as a social institution, but we also confess as members of corporate groups. We confess the sin of labor, or the sin of capital and management; the sin of the white race or of the black; the sin of nation, or the sin of a particular culture.

Absolute faith permits us to bear without despair our own sinfulness as individuals, as a corporate Church, as corporate groups in human history. It permits us to bear sinfulness with patience and hope, not by condoning it. Faith wages relentless warfare against it in ourselves and in our society and in our churches. But we can live despite our sin because we trust something beyond ourselves; we bear our sin because we are borne by God.

Nowhere has this been said more profoundly, more simply, or more beautifully than in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. The church in Corinth was a very young church. St. Paul himself had founded it at great expenditure of physical and psychic energies. He had been away from the young congregation for some time and had heard that it was divided by theological partisanship. There was, in a sense, a beginning of church disunity.

One group said, "I belong to Paul." (This should have pleased St. Paul, one might think. Here was a body of "Pauline Christians," his own disciples.) Another group said, "I belong to Apollos." Apollos, to the best of our knowledge, was steeped in Greek philosophy and was preaching a kind of Platonistic version of Christianity, apparently with great dialectical skill and persuasion. Others of the Corinthian Christians said, "I belong to Cephas." This was the Petrine party, the party of St. Peter. And still others said, "I belong to Christ. We will have nothing to do with any of these 'isms," they said. "We are simply 'Disciples of Christ', 'the Assembly of God.' We are simply Christians." They failed to see the irony of the fact that they were only a fourth party. They were blind to their mistake

partly because they concealed it from themselves with a universalistic name. There are always those who won't be just Presbyterians, Baptists, Anglicans, Roman Catholics.

What did St. Paul say to this theological division among Christians? Did he say, "The Apollonians and Peter's party and Christ's party are all wrong; it is the Paulinists who are right"? Not a bit. Let's look at I Corinthians 3, starting at the fifth verse:

> What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.
>
> He who plants and he who waters are equal, and each shall receive his wages according to his labor. For we are fellow workmen for God; you are God's field, God's building.
>
> According to the commission of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and another man [Apollos] is building upon it. Let each man take care how he builds upon it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Our trust in God, therefore, can transcend our differences, whether they are theological, political, or any other. And our absolute trust, our absolute faith, goes to God revealed in Jesus Christ. Then St. Paul goes on to explain what God's judgments will be on those who build on the foundation:

> Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble—each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

St. Paul is speaking of the ultimate Day of Judgment. Since it can be described only symbolically, let's do it with a vengeance, so that we will be clear about it. Christ comes with the angelic hosts on the clouds of heaven; the throne of judgment

is set up in the heavens, and the nations are haled before it. The nations (i.e., those who have never had the opportunity to become Christians, the "Gentiles") as individuals, are separated into sheep and goats; they are assigned to ultimate life and to ultimate separation from that life—to heaven and to hell, if you will. This is the searing fire of the divine judgment that the Last Day brings. The nations are judged as individual persons by their treatment of the Christians, "the least of these my brethren" (Matt.: 25:31ff). As for Christians, "the faithful," if the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.

St. Paul is saying: "I submit my theological building, Paulinism, alongside that of Apollos and of Peter and of this other Christian group, to the ultimate judgments of God. I shall witness against them as I see the truth, but I never say that I am identical with God, that God is a Paulinist. If in the Last Day it be demonstrated that God is a Paulinist, glory be! I shall have my reward. And if it should prove that Apollos is right or even more right, as against me, then Apollos will have his reward. And glory be—but not quite so glory be! But he will have his reward."

Then St. Paul continues: "If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire."

That man will suffer loss, yes. But will he be damned? Oh no; not if he did not mistake the superstructure for the foundation. If his allegiance is to Christ and not to his interpretation of Christ, then, even if his interpretation proves to be absolutely wrong, he will accept the judgments of Christ and he will be saved, although he will suffer loss. You see how you can trust. Such trustful ones will not be cut off from ultimate life.

You see how you can trust God, and how you can trust your trust in God. You can trust your commitment, your allegiance, your fidelity to Christ above your sin and your error. Even if it means that every single thing you ever did or said is burned up in the Day of Judgment, it is not a matter of ultimate damnation—not if your faith holds. You shall be saved "as through fire."

Absolute faith enables us to bear our sin without condoning it, to be realistic about it without despair, and to submit all of our works without deifying them to the ultimate judgment of God. But it also helps us to bear the sin of the other, even when we are the victims.

I think this is not so hard for a Christian as it is to bear his own sin, but it is very difficult: to trust God, and to let one's trust in God trust that other even though he stand against one. If we can do this we will never Satanize or demonize the other. Our warfare against him will never become a religious crusade in which we identify ourselves with God and the other with Satan—even when the other identifies himself with God.

I remember, back in the 1930's when I first began to teach Christian ethics at Virginia Theological Seminary, that there was a goodly bit of Christian Utopianism about. The liberal Social Gospel was in vogue then, and this was the latter and less realistic phase in the movement of which Walter Rauschenbusch was a leading figure. I used to say a very hard word to my students, and it was a very hard word to me too. I used to ask them to go and stand in the middle of Memorial Bridge over the Potomac and look both ways—to the great monument to Abraham Lincoln on the Washington side of the river, and to Arlington Hall, the historic home of Robert E. Lee, on the other side of the river. I asked them to meditate on the fact that if in the course of their ministry they produced a laity who were up to the Christian statesmanship of Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee, they could well congratulate themselves that they had had a good ministry under God. And yet these two men had fought the Civil War.

That's a measure of how much we must tolerate the sin and the error even in our fellow Christians.

Only a profound Christian culture, or profound segments and individuals in such a culture, can achieve this. For when we are hit hard by a self-deifying force of some kind—whether it be one from the Left, as in Communism, from the Right as some form of American fascism, for instance, or from our own self-exalting souls—whichever kind it is, the temptation is always to resist idolatry with idolatry.

One of Dostoievski's characters in *The Brothers Karamazov* speaks to a follower of a different religion in these terms: "Come, desert your god and worship my god with me, or I shall destroy you and your god." When god is pitted against god in history, the very claim of that other god to be god jeopardizes our claim to be equated with the divine. That leaves no alternative save the annihilation of the other god and his worshipers. We must therefore meditate on the fact that Christianity's God *in history* is a crucified man, one who does not maintain himself as an institution or as an individual, but who spends himself absolutely. Only this kind of appearance of God can break and humble all the pretenders to divinity, all the arrogant self-deifications of history. And where men are so humbled, then even when they fight a terrible war such as our Civil War, it is a gentleman's war compared to a demonic, crusading, religiously self-righteous war. No group is without conflicts, but humility can inform the conflicts. Then, using the very clashes, God might produce something better than if any one particular side or one particular constellation of forces went continually without opposition.

Hope for this world

Ultimate faith also gives us a hope in this world, a hope for human history. This hope is not that we shall have Utopia; this hope is not that there shall be an end to the struggle against sin in ourselves and against sin in the other man. But on the other hand, the hope does not say that the form of the struggle must always be the same; it can be upon different and higher levels—as, indeed, it can be upon lower levels.

We have no dogma about historical progress, that it is inevitable or that it is impossible. For have we not seen great and, even at their best, brutal civilizations such as the Roman Empire, decay and disappear? But we have also seen goods from that dead world saved and passed on by the Church to the barbarians who destroyed the classical world. There are no limits to what a great Christian culture can do in terms of historical progress, but progress in no way means that we are ever delivered from the possibility of a new form of sin which

we have never known. Remember that if we could achieve the best possible Christian approximation to Utopia tomorrow, it would take just as much hanging on God, just as profound a humility, just as deep a corporate worship life, just as deep a prayer life to keep this Utopia for one day as it took to get it in the first place.

So our constant prayer must be: "Take not thy Holy Spirit from us." For if we turn away from God, and in judgment he takes his Holy Spirit from us, then the vacuum which is left is filled by the anti-Godly spirits, the demons—by Communism or Nazism or Fascism or McCarthyism, or by some terrible, deceitful, lying, twisting, and distorting thing which warps the very image of God in man.

The true Church in its reliance upon God can face the crisis of our time. It sees the terrible shrinking of the area of Western civilization, the West's deep unbelief in itself, and its lack of missionary passion.

As the Christian faces this predicament today, he is like St. Augustine when he lay upon his deathbed in his see-city of Hippo in 430 A.D. The barbarians were hammering at the gates, having ransacked the Roman Empire. St. Augustine prayed, and his petitions are on three levels, which seem to me the ones on which a Christian always lives. St. Augustine prayed, "O Lord, deliver this city from its enemies; or if that may not be, give us the strength to bear thy will; or at least take me from this world and receive me in thy bosom."

When a Christian prays he is making clear the things he thinks *he* should be doing. And when a Western Christian prays today, "O Lord, deliver Western civilization from its enemies," that means that he is desperately committed to doing everything in his power to strengthen, revitalize, and transform this great culture and civilization of which he is a part. We in America have the primary responsibility for promoting that task. If Western civilization is to be saved, it will be because, on the human level, we are its major power of salvation; we alone have the military power, the economic resources, and the relative lack of injury from past wars. We act and pray, "O Lord, deliver this city."

But we Christians know that no man who has a sense of humility and the least understanding of God can say with any certainty that in God's sight the West is good enough to survive. For we know that God does not measure us in relation to the behavior of others; he measures us by our obedience to the task he gave us as a special people. We Judaeo-Christians learned that way back in the time of Habakkuk. "Yes, God," he said, "I know we Jews are very disobedient and sinful and apostate and idolatrous; but we are so much better than these bitter and hasty Assyrians that you would certainly not use them to chastise us!" And God said, in effect: "You cannot escape me by pleading relative justice. I did not give the Assyrians the task I gave the Jews, and I measure you by the opportunity you had. You failed, and therefore I will use the bitter and hasty Assyrians to destroy you; and when I have done that, I will break Assyria for its pride. I will break the rod with which I chastise you." This was part of Second Isaiah's good news (Is. 48:14).

So every Christian knows that we cannot say that because we are the children of God, he will not use Communism to chastise or destroy us. Therefore the end may come. We may not be good enough to live. It may be the judgment of God that we perish. Thus we can pray with St. Augustine on the second level: "Give us the strength to bear thy will." St. Augustine's city, the Roman Empire, was not saved; but the Church bore God's will. Missionary band by missionary band, century by century, the Church patiently and sacrificially converted the barbarian. It civilized him by releasing to him, when he was able to receive them, the treasures of the ancient world which it had stored in its monastic heart.

Even if Western civilization should go today, the Church will be here. It may be underground, but it has been at its best there. And long after the fever and heat and self-righteousness of Communism has become a thing of past history, the Christian fellowship and the fruit of the Spirit, charity, shall be baptizing and remaking other cultures. The Church has the courage to endure.

Christians have the courage to endure because they also live

on the third level of St. Augustine's prayer: "or at least take me from this world and receive me in thy bosom." Because of God's action in history, we are not finally and permanently citizens of this world, and we cannot perish with it. We have a home in heaven, we are a colony of the heavenly order here in this world, as St. Paul said. Because we live in heaven, we are better citizens of this world; because our life is ensconced in the life of God, we are the only people of continuity in history. We are as old as Abraham; we have seen many civilizations come and go, and we shall see many more come and go. For we participate in the eternal life of God himself by his gracious self-humiliation in Christ.

Hope beyond this world

We are, therefore, not without hope for the world, although our hope is a realistic hope. But greater than this, we are not without hope even if the world must finally disappear, as some astrophysicists tell us. For there is but one final reason why you and I are here on this "cooling star," as a Maxwell Anderson character in *Winterset* called it. The reason is that God wanted some others than himself upon whom to bestow his love, others who are bound together by that same quality of love with which he loves us, and who use all the subhuman things—the physical, vegetable, and animal things—as sacramental expressions of that love toward him and toward one another.

If we shall have found that love, then this is the purpose of it all. This is eternal life itself which we have in its first installment here. In our ultimate trust, our absolute faith, we can simply put our hand into the hand of God and launch into that which, in empirical scientific terms, is totally unknown—namely, death for the individual and for this planet and for the human, historical scene.

We can do so with complete confidence, knowing that it is not we who maintain and continue ourselves, but that it is God who raises us up. We "look for the Resurrection of the dead: And the Life of the World to Come."

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